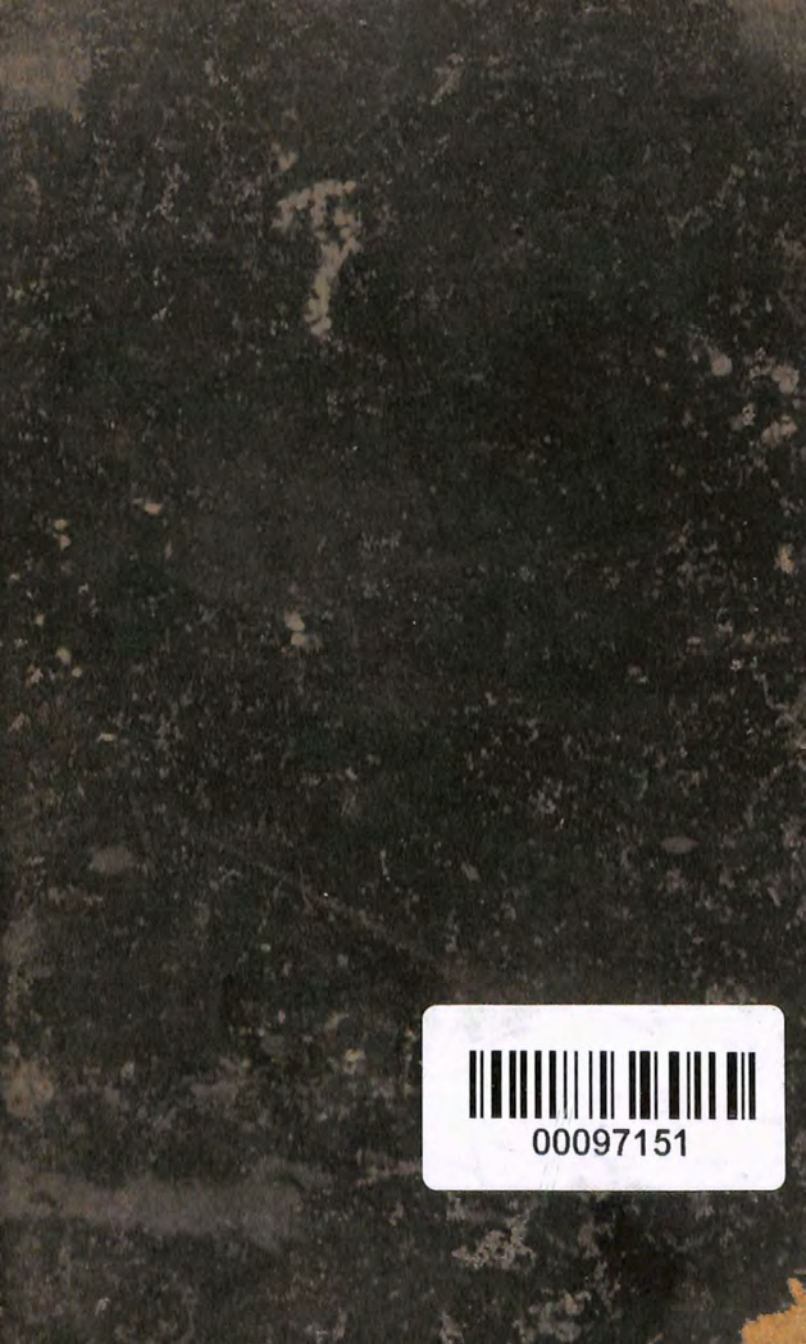
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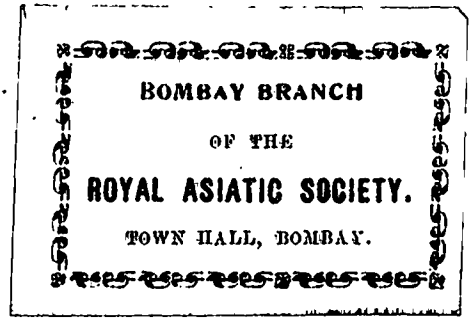

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CHAPTER I.

ELLESMERE'S PLAN FOR A NEW ESSAY.

'I HAVE a great plan in my head,' said Ellesmere to me one morning that we were pacing up and down the terrace in front of our hotel,—at Oberwesel, I think. By the way, how much I often pity Londoners because they so seldom enjoy these little bits of walks before and after breakfast, these welcomings of the bright morning and its beautiful odours, which we have in the country, and even in small towns.

'Well, what is your great plan, Ellesmere?' I replied: 'some mischief, I suppose?'

'You must know,' he answered, 'that I am beginning to like this fat man immensely, and to see that there is a great deal in him. What a beautiful nature it is! How serenely he takes all my impertinence; not coldly, or superciliously, or, if I may say so, unappre-

ciatingly, but simply, and with serenity, like a man who has seen and suffered much, and is not now to be further discomposed by anything, or anybody. How rich and flowing, too, his language is. To be sure, there is a good deal of unnecessary frill and ruffle, bag-wig, diamond-hilted sword, and amplitude of laced waistcoat, as in the dress of our grandfathers, which I always like to see upon the stage, or at a fancy-ball, because somehow or other, it is associated with the peculiar idea that I attach to the word "gentleman." But still, notwithstanding the superfluous ornament, Midhurst talks remarkably well.

'Well, I vote that we try to get more than we do from our fat friend, who, if you observe, mingles but shyly in our conversations, and often only after the rest of us have said our say. I propose that we should persuade him to write an essay, and I have already fixed upon the subject for him.

'You must have noticed what a quietly lugubrious view he takes of all human affairs. He must write us an elaborate essay upon the miseries of human life, in which, depend upon it, we shall get a great deal of the man's

experience. Milverton shall be appointed to answer him. There are sufficient depths of melancholy in Milverton too; but, if you observe, he never approves of anybody's melancholy but his own, and is always ready vigorously to defend the nature of things, if any one else presumes to attack it. On such occasions he is sure to be full of joys and hopes, of remedies and consolations. I can tell him he will need all the adroitness and subtlety he can muster to parry "the heavy blows and great discouragements" which our melancholy Falstaff, our Rasselas-Falstaff as I call him, in rounded, ample, latinized, gorgeous sentences, will deal out upon the unfortunate human race.

'I will go from side to side, rather inclining to Milverton, because, even if he were to prove an equal antagonist to our stout friend, the other has the least difficult branch of the argument to maintain. It is always easy to take a mournful view of life. One gloomy man will successfully depress a whole company of cheerfully disposed people. I once saw such a curious instance of that. I was honoured by being admitted to a party of

hopeful philosophers, and they harangued splendidly upon the hopes and destinies of the human race, magnifying the great things that had been done in this generation, and prophesying still greater for the next. They themselves had some notable project for the said human race, which, when universally adopted, was to arrange everybody comfortably ever afterwards.

'There was one dissentient; but, amidst the hubbub of hopeful people, his warning melancholy voice was lost. He bided his time. It was a fine evening, the glass doors were thrown open, and we walked out upon the balcony for a few moments, and looked up at the clear sky. There was a light wail heard in the distance of some dreary ballad-monger. Now was the dissentient's time. I forget what his exact words were, but he bade his friends look at the stars; then he asked them to consider the littleness of man and his planet, and to contemplate the isolation of each world in the boundless realms of space. Then he spoke of the isolation of each human creature throughout life and in death. Though I forget his words, the impression made by them still remains upon me.

Somehow or other, he contrived to get the immensities of creation on his side, as it were, and to strike a note of sorrow which effectually quelled the joyous feelings of the company. Very unreasonably, I dare say. Milverton would have been sure to contend, that there was far more of hope than of dismay in the grand scene that overarched us. But the others had to a certain extent talked themselves out; and, in short, the dismal man triumphed, as he generally will succeed in doing.

'For that reason I see I must incline a great deal to Milverton's side of the argument. As for you, you must not preachify over much. Of course all things are right. The gloomy view, such at least as Mr. Midhurst will take, cannot, I think, be the sound one. At any rate, it is not the pious one. But you must not come in too soon with anything that will overwhelm them. We must hear what they will say, looking at the matter from a worldly point of view, or going no higher than natural religion.

'I take it for granted that in a previous conversation we can so play up to the subject as to bring in an opportunity for urgently

requesting them to assume the parts we have assigned to them. Any two confederates can make talk go nearly as they please.'

I assented to Ellesmere's plan, being somewhat curious to see how Mr. Midhurst would acquit himself. We did lead up the conversation in the way that Ellesmere had planned, and did, after some solicitation, being aided by the girls, succeed in persuading Mr. Midhurst and Milverton to undertake the parts we had resolved they should take. I pass over several slight conversations that occurred, and sundry journeyings which took place, and will proceed at once to the reading of Mr. Midhurst's essay, which I remember was read on a lowering day (there is often good luck for these melancholy people), while we were sitting on the grass which deftly covers, without hiding, the form of the lower part of the ancient Roman amphitheatre at Trèves.

The following was our conversation as we walked from our hotel to the site of the amphitheatre.

ELLESMERE. I have the greatest faith, as everybody knows, in the opinions of learned men like

Dunsford, even when the learned men differ totally in opinion from one another. *A fortiori*, therefore, I am convinced that the chronology usually accepted by learned men must be right. If, however, I were to trust my own unassisted intellect, I should conclude, from what I have just observed at our *table d'hôte*, that the world was at least five hundred and fifty-seven thousand two hundred and thirty-three years old. I am particular, gentlemen, about the last-named figure, the figure three, because I observe that all great chronologers are particular about the small figures.

MR. MIDHURST. Differing with Ellesmere in the small figures, I agree with him as regards the half-million. The world could never have come to its present state of folly in a few thousand years.

DUNSFORD. What is all this about? What do you mean, Ellesmere?

ELLESMERE. The earliest records show, do they not, my learned friend, that salt was always a prime requisite with the human race? After the lapse of innumerable ages came salt-cellars; but you will still observe that, in several of the most civilized parts of the earth, the inhabitants have not yet arrived at the use of salt-spoons. You may travel through the greater part of this large continent, beholding superb edifices and wondrous works of art, but without having the good fortune to meet with a single salt-spoon. Now, when you consider that

these regions have been traversed constantly during the last thirty years by persons belonging to a nation so advanced in the arts of life that they habitually use salt-spoons, and who must often have mentioned this remarkable fact to the natives, I leave you to guess what time it must have taken for savages to have advanced from fingers to knives and forks.

MR. MIDHURST. I often feel a great pity for the intelligent people we are at present travelling amongst, when I reflect that not one of them has ever been in a bed, at least in his own country. For we cannot admit that the thing they call a bed is a bed.

ELLESMERE. You will all come round to my views of chronology. One of the few sharp things that Milverton has said, when I have not been by to assist him, is—'What a wonderful inventor that man must have been who first contrived a wheel!' And I have no doubt that the sound, thriving, well-to-do people of his day maintained that he was a dangerous fool, that the Church ought to see about burning him (you may be sure it did its duty), and that burdens might be much more safely and expeditiously carried on the back, or dragged along the ground, as they always had been. Now, shall we allow thirty thousand years for the gradual introduction of the wheel, considering how much there doubtless was to be said against it upon the good old principles of Church and State?

MILVERTON. You need not preach upon this text to me, Ellesmere. I have always been fully aware how much difficulty there is in getting anything done that is worth doing, any folly uprooted, any new and good invention introduced into common life. Despotism tends to prevent all growth. Freedom tends to make growth complicated and most difficult. Now we think we have come to a very wonderful thing in having examinations for public offices.

ELLESMERE. Well done, Milverton! He is sure to branch off in some most unexpected manner, to try and turn my folly, as he would call it, to some account, though how salt-spoons should have suggested public examinations surpasses my comprehension.

MILVERTON. The transition was as natural as could be. From your salt-spoons we went to the difficulty of getting anything done, especially any new thing. From that my mind wandered (no, not wandered), proceeded naturally to sundry great public works that we English have in hand. I then thought of the choice of men to get these works accomplished; then, of our official system, and there I was at this new scheme of examinations.

Now I was observing some little time ago the conduct of an extensive affair; and something struck me which may be very obvious, but which had never occurred to me before in the conduct of business, or of life;—namely, that you not only require men of very different qualifications, but that the different

qualifications should come in and be pre-eminent at different epochs of the affair. First, there is wanted the man of great methodical power, who can really make a plan. Then there is the man who sees difficulties—often an abounding nuisance when he comes in at the wrong time, or when he is concerned with the business throughout its whole career. But there is a time for him too, when he may be most useful. He is seldom anything else but a foreseer of difficulties. Then, there is the man of details, who masters long strings of facts, who classifies, abridges, and prepares them for the comprehension of other minds. Then, there is the out-of-doors enthusiast, who fights the battle amongst the people. Then, there is the skilful and eloquent man who pushes the affair through assemblages of men. Before him I should perhaps have named the practical man, who knows how far you can go in the enterprise, and how much other men, who care little or nothing about the subject, will endure of it: who, in a word, understands how to lop off from the enterprise all that is not absolutely necessary, and so to reduce and smooth the thing, that it encounters the least possible friction.

ELLESMERE. Do not go on any more. You have proved to us, that it is nearly impossible to do any new and great thing.

MILVERTON. Well, it does seem to be very difficult.

ELLESMERE. And you were going to say that examinations may keep out ignorant fools, but cannot ensure the bringing in of fit men at the right time.

But now remember that we are to have Mr. Midhurst's essay this afternoon—that is why I treated you all to a bottle of what they call 'real Johannisberg'—and remember, Milverton, that you are to be on the hopeful and comfortable side, so you need not have begun by pointing out that improvement is difficult, and you ought rather to have maintained that it is a wonder, considering the intelligence of mankind, and their readiness to accept whatever is useful (see the reception of Stephenson's evidence before the first Railway Committee), that they have been anything like six thousand years in attaining to their present height of civilization. You are, I fear, a careless advocate.

Hereupon, we took our seats fronting the place where the Emperor or the Consul must have sat in former ages, and Mr. Midhurst began to read his essay, to which I must devote a new chapter.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE MISERIES OF HUMAN LIFE.

[MR. MIDHURST'S ESSAY.]

AM dissatisfied with all the metaphors and similes that have been used by poets, philosophers, and *priests*, to illustrate the futile and miserable state of man upon the earth. The fly upon the wheel—the insect of a day (perhaps a sunny day—for the insect) —the generations of swiftly crumpling, withering, rotting leaves,—the flower that buds, and grows, and falls away, petal by petal, delicately, in the breeze—the smoke that rises, seen for a moment, and, that dissipating, goes, no man knows whither—the noxious vapour that soon vanishes away—are all of them too favourable emblems of the state of erring, short-lived, misguided, miserable man. These things and crea-

tures fulfil a light and easy destiny, and cannot for a moment be compared to a creature of many griefs, of unutterable longings, dire responsibilities, and inadequate performances; to a creature who is sure to plan, and whose plans for himself are mostly sure to fail; who discerns what he cannot grasp; contemplates what he cannot understand, and yet pines to understand; who looks before and after, seeing on the one track broken hopes, neglected occasions, defeated aspirations, unintended crimes, and misfortunes largely created by himself; and, on the other, time and reason to mourn over all the past miseries which he so well remembers and so bitterly deplores.

[ELLESMERE, (aside to me). If it goes on in this dolorous way, we shall have cause to mourn over the success of *our* plan.]

I might, after the fashion of Jeremy Taylor, moralize on the paltry life and common death of the highest, and might tell the story of Ninus the Assyrian, who wore a mitre, but is now a little heap of dust.* I might, on the

* This is the passage to which Mr. Midhurst alluded.
'Ninus the Asyrian had an ocean of gold, and other riches

other hand, dwell on the sordid wretchedness of the poor man, born amidst filth, with hunger and dirt for his playmates, with stupid toil for the occupation of his manhood, and with enforced alms for the stay of his declining years. But these sharp contrasts savour of the melodrame; and I prefer to abide in those safer regions where I can find the ordinary miseries of ordinary men, being quite secure of finding there ample materials to prove and illustrate my theme.

And first, look what a web of adverse circumstances most men are born into. Consider

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more than the sand in the Caspian sea; he never saw the stars, and perhaps he never desired it; he never stirred up the holy fire among the Magi, nor touched his god with the sacred rod according to the laws; he never offered sacrifice, nor worshipped the Deity, nor administered justice, nor spake to his people, nor numbered them: but he was most valiant to eat and drink; and having mingled his wines, he threw the rest upon the stones. This man is dead: behold his sepulchre, and now hear where Ninus is. Sometimes I was Ninus, and drew the breath of a living man, but now am nothing but clay. I have nothing but what I did eat, and what I served to myself in lust (that was and is all my portion): the wealth with which I was (esteemed) blessed, my enemies meeting together shall bear away, as the mad Thyades carry a raw goat. I am gone to hell; and when I went thither I neither carried gold, nor horse, nor silver chariot. I that wore a mitre, am now a little heap of dust.' — *Holy Dying*, chap. i. sec. 2.

the ideas, which are about them from their birth, often entirely wrong, and through which they have to get, late, and sadly torn and bruised, at the real laws of nature and of life. Even the common proverb does not make a man wise about his own health until past middle life; and it is admitted that up to forty he may be no fool, and yet not old enough to be his own physician. Then—and this betrays a state of adverse circumstances that must have struck the most unobservant of mankind—reflect with dread upon the inordinate punishment attached to trifling errors or to light mischances, occurring even at the earliest and most immature periods of life. A man passes this way or that, seeing little difference between the pathways, or he crosses the road to speak to a friend, and he does something, or sees somebody, or meets with some little mishap, which slight circumstance of evil is for ever to grow bigger and bigger for him, and finally perhaps to overwhelm him. In the gaiety of his heart he trips down two steps at once, and is never the same man afterwards. His life is changed from an active to a passive and studious one; and, looking back, one cannot but admit that

his whole career was at the mercy of that small and childish accident. Circumspection seems to be of little avail: indeed it would require to be infinite. To use a fine image from Calderon, you bear about with you the burden of a buckler at your side for a whole year, but it is wanting on the very day when it might have afforded its master some protection.* I think, too, I have remarked that the little wayside pictures (set up in some countries to commemorate the accidents which have occurred on a line of road), with their rude inscriptions pathetically telling you to pray for the soul of the departed, or to offer up thanks to the Virgin Mary for the sufferer's deliverance from death, are not by any means to be most frequently met with at the most dangerous parts of the road, but at some point, perhaps, where the good waggoner or the devout peasant was going along in fancied security, oblivious of all harm. To

* The passage from Calderon to which Mr. Midhurst alluded is no doubt the following from the play *Mañana será otro Dia.*

'No ha de decirse, que fui
Conmigo, como el broquel,
Que anda todo el año al lado,
Y solo el dia ha faltado,
Que quieren servirse dél.'—Jorn. 1.

sum the matter up, it seems as if man were in a world too powerful for him; that he is never, to use a modern phrase, thoroughly 'master of the situation.' Hume, in one of his *Essays*, points out how much greater man would be, if he had a little more of any one good quality; and he takes, as an instance, industry. But this is a delusion. It is always a little more, or a little less, that is wanting in the character of any man—the greatest—to make it harmonious, self-sufficing, and complete.

Consider again the proneness to evil, not only in man, but in everything about him, so that all his labour is uphill work that never ends. What is good cannot be left alone for a moment, but it rusts, or changes, or decays. And what is evil scarcely ever becomes less by being left alone. The world is like a great machine. On it goes, pounding away at its work, everywhere neglectful of or indifferent to the claims and the peculiarities of the individual, who thinks to flit by it, and merely to observe its movements, remaining himself in safety; but the winds of circumstance flutter his garments, he is caught up by its cruel wheels,

and ground into the forms that it is set to grind men into.

Then we talk of experience. What is experience but a fine word for suffering? The blunder that you have not made yourself you have not fully profited by; and, when you have fully profited, it is generally too late to turn the profit to account. Experience is mostly bought so dear, that there is no money left to buy anything else with.

Should there come a great man, look at the men and things he has to deal with, and wonder that great men have been able to do what little they have done. Consider the poverty of the characters that mostly surround such a man, their littlenesses, their weaknesses, their unaccountable and ever-present vanities.

Consider how many utterly unmanageable persons there are in the world. You cannot say they are madmen: You cannot say they are idiots. But rationality flickers about them in so strange a way that they are often more difficult to deal with than the utterly irrational. In every two or three households there is one such person who is a torment and a puzzle to

the wiser ones who have to try and guide him.

Then consider the affections. Remember the loneliness of life. We talk much of friendship; and tomes have been written upon its loveliness, its rights, its duties, and its pleasures. But where are the friends to whom all this ponderous writing should apply? A few bright names, so few that we may count them on our fingers, and some of them in fiction, will occur; and they, at least, furnish examples for what has been written on friendship. David and Jonathan, Alexander and Hephæstion, Damon and Pythias, Nisus and Euryalus, with a few others, form the staple of our examples. But how rarely do we meet Nisus and Euryalus in the busy, scheming, self-absorbed, self-devoured world around us.

Then take love; that which is believed to be, nay that which is, the perfect flower of human existence. To change the simile:—by love, as from a mirror, are reflected and brought back to a focus all the brightest feelings and the noblest aspirations of man's nature; while, strange to say, from this magical mirror none of the bad qualities are reflected. Or they

pass unheeded through it. But this is only for a time; and, except in some few happy instances, for a short time. Familiarity dulls the mirror. The bad qualities find a surface from which they are easily reflected: the good qualities a surface which each day's tarnishing renders more unfit to reflect them. The magic brightness dies away; and men and women, who had been in a seventh heaven of their own creating, return to careful, tiresome, ordinary, life again.

ELLESMERE. I must interpose. I declare if ever I am in love, it will not be so with me. There will be no magic mirror, and no bright qualities reflected, and nobody shall be taken in by me.

MR. MIDHURST. The love of a shrewd lawyer, in large practice, verging on to middle life, is not likely to be of that magic character which I have described. There will be no brightness, and no seventh heaven. Such a prosaic affair does not come within the scope of my observations. It may, however, lead to sufficient misery. I resume my essay.

We have spoken of friendship and of love. If we consider the ordinary intercourse of life, my task will be still easier, for nobody will have the face to contend that such intercourse

is not full to the brim of dullness, dissimulation and formality. Mankind is like 'a bag of serpents,' as Mr. Carlyle well says, 'in which each serpent is rearing his head and hissing, and struggling to get higher than the others.' While I am speaking of companionship, I cannot help noticing how sad a thing it is that there is such a bar between the young and old, to prevent them from understanding each other. The young, who think that there is no difficulty in anything, and that they will ultimately possess the whole world (each one of them does), can little appreciate the timidity and parsimony, often the result of such hard blows and containing so much self-denial and self-sacrifice, which are the portion of older minds. The sentiments of people of different ages jar upon each other; and it requires a constant exercise of loving imagination for the young and the old to understand and tolerate each other.

Then we come to knowledge. I must admit that that is something. But was any man ever satisfied with it? Did it ever prevent the feeling of loneliness in any man? Is it gained without large sacrifices? Look at

the faded faces of men eminent for knowledge; and afterwards answer me that question.

I should be as tedious as a professed moralist were I to dwell upon the miseries caused by the greater passions which infest the human race. I need merely name envy, hatred, malice, and ambition. Think, for one moment, of the follies these passions are: think how undeserving of your hatred any human being is (though seemingly most prosperous) by reason of his smallness, his secret miseries, and the clouds of disaster which are sure at one time or other to thicken around him. No man is worth hating, or being envied, or being supplanted. But I scorn to dwell on this easy branch of my subject, which has already had vast libraries of bulky volumes devoted to it.

If, however, the greater passions of men could be satiated, if the ambitious could be satisfied with the honours or the dignities they gain, if the loving could be satisfied with the love they give or inspire, there would still remain the smaller and the meaner passions, which are alone sufficient to embitter great part of human existence.

Take jealousy for instance, not the larger and more ferocious kind of jealousy, but that petty kind which is as omnipresent amongst mankind as the atmosphere. 'Should I not have been the person to be entrusted with this work?' 'Ought he not to have spoken to me first?' 'Are not another's claims always perferred to mine?' 'Was my name mentioned where it ought to have been in the dispatches?' 'Does the public know that I am the person who have most merit in this transaction?' 'How shameful it is that this one or that one should be liked better than I am'—these or something like these, are the questions which a mean jealousy prompts many a man to ask in the course of every few successive hours.

And the worst of it is, that nothing would satiate this jealousy. Those who are preferred are not preferred enough; and those who enjoy favour, watch with unutterable heart-burnings the rise of any newly-favoured person. These feelings are everywhere. I do not know much personally of the serene atmosphere of courts or cabinets or councils, but they are composed of men, and wherever there is an assemblage of men, there are sure to be the meanest

rivalries. Few can see the beauty of being second or third in any career or occupation; and everybody, looking upwards with hungry eyes, forgets the multitude who are beneath him. I say then that these mean passions are to be found in courts, camps, cabinets, colleges (for the learned and the wise have their jealousies too, not a whit less bitter than those of other people, as may be discovered by any one who has talked for half an hour with rival philologists), senates, convocations, and corporations. And who shall say that the most private and small domestic household is free from these malign and petty passions, which embitter alike every day's work and every day's pleasure? Any one, who has ruled over the small number of two persons, must have experienced how difficult it is to prevent these two from being jealous of each other; and must have found how much the jealousy of his subordinates may hinder their work and his.

Then take the employments of mankind: what weary, inane, monotonous things they are! I might descend into the lowest ranks of employment, and show how many thou-

sands of our fellow-creatures are occupied in factories, from morning till night, joining threads that have snapped, or performing some one operation in metal, not very engaging or varied, such as making pins' heads. I might also descant upon the many loathsome employments which must exist upon the earth. But I abhor extremes, and my argument will be stronger if I keep to the more favoured occupations in which men employ themselves.

Let us begin with the learned professions. Year after year the lawyer proceeds in his wearisome round of nice cavilling, dexterous sophistry-weaving, or dull verbiage-spinning. The greater part of his knowledge has no basis in nature, and would be swept away at once if men were wiser and more reasonable than they are. The divine has a wider and deeper career; but it is always comprehended within narrow limits; and it is very dangerous for him to think out anything of his own. The man of medicine, whose doings, I must admit, have, or ought to have, some basis in nature, is also for the most part a slave to routine; and the sneer of Voltaire is not without some truth even in this age, that the

physician is one 'who pours drugs of which he knows little into a body of which he knows less.'

Then take the soldier and the sailor. Their professions seem to the young and the thoughtless very glorious, but to the rest of the world they appear a hideous necessity. And anything more dull, formal, and uninteresting than the greater part of their career cannot well be imagined. At least so they are pleased to tell us themselves, and I see no reason whatever for doubting their word.

The trader, the artisan, the labourer, the clerk, has each a very narrow sphere to act in. For the most part they soon learn to do the best they can in their respective occupations; and ever afterwards it is mere mill-work for them.

I had forgotten to name the artist and the man of letters. They seem to have a very wide field, but it does not turn out to be so wide as we should have expected. Soon they find out their speciality, and ever afterwards they go droning on at the same thing which they can do a little better than some one else, and so they repeat themselves indefinitely, until their generous patron, the

world, becomes tired of their doings and of them.

Over all this various kind of work there come weariness, numbness, and a sense of its inanity: the wheels of life drag heavily: and the man, as he lies down to rest, thinks with a sigh that he has done nothing to-day better, or more to the purpose, than he did yesterday, and that to-morrow's occupations will be even as to-day's. There is quite as much vanity and folly in men's most serious work as in their lightest play and most trivial pleasures. And as for these pleasures, they may be disposed of in a single sentence by saying, as we can with truth, that even in the most civilized nations, men contrive to make their pleasures as dull, longsome, and laborious as any part of their daily task-work.

Consider again the conditions under which men act and live—the conditions I mean of their minds, their bodies, and of the external circumstances which surround them. Shakespeare tells us,

> 'The learned pate
> Ducks to the golden fool: all is oblique:'

But this is not the worst of the matter. It is

that the condition of men is such that any choice amongst them is for the most part haphazard, and is necessarily so. People complain that the round men are put into the square holes, and the square men into the round holes; but they forget that it would take the whole knowledge and attention of mankind to place men rightly; and in fine, we must recognise the fact that there is not time enough in life to make men's positions suitable for them.

Then look at another condition of human life, namely, that all objects which are desirable, when seen from a distance, lose at least half their desirability when they are seen near, and especially when they are appropriated.

It cannot have escaped the notice of any one who has had much experience, that human life is a system of cunningly devised checks and counter-checks. This is easily seen in considering physical things, such for instance as the human body. One of these bodies has a particular disorder. You could cure it by a certain remedy, if that remedy could be continued far enough. But it cannot, as it

would produce another disorder. The same law holds good throughout life; and sometimes, where there is an appearance of the power of free movement in many directions, there is in reality a check to movement in every one.

It is a consequence of the law just indicated that narrow limits are assigned to all human conquests; and great success in any direction is mostly gained by fostering a great disease. The Spanish proverb, which Mr. Milverton quoted some time ago, applies well here, 'So much as there is of the more, so much there is of the less.' The limits within which a man, or a system, or an enterprise, can grow harmoniously and securely, are exceedingly confined.

A child does not see this limitation, and stretches out its hand to grasp the moon, unconscious that nature has put any limits to its power of grasping. A boy would conquer the whole world, and desires to have everything, and to be everybody; but he soon finds out that nature is not so easily mastered: and besides there are other boys, who also wish to possess and dominate the whole universe. The

man thinks he is much wiser, but goes on after the same fashion, hoping too much, desiring too much, and planning too largely. All the while, however, as he cannot help gaining something from the hard blows of experience, though he persevere in hoping and desiring, and planning, he becomes as timid and apprehensive as a lizard. He has lost the confidence of boyhood, and has not gained wisdom. The immense plans and projects of humanity must be the most amusing thing for a superior being to contemplate, for I suppose it is true that no man has ever laid out his plans with sufficient humility for them to afford a reasonable hope of being carried into execution by him.

I might have left it entirely to a friend of ours, now present, to point out and dwell upon, the various minor vexations and miseries of human life which he has largely treated in his essay on 'Worry,' and the grand total of which made so formidable an appearance when enumerated by a skilful master of the subject. But in so vast a sphere of vexation there are points which escaped even his notice; one of which I cannot resist touching upon.

It is this,—that, according to the usual current of human life, the demands upon a man's means often increase at a time when he is least able to bear these demands, to improve those means, or to shift with skill his burden in any way: when he has no longer spare health, energy, or time at his command: and when a certain rigidness is impressing itself on his mind and his fortunes. Hence, to a generous man there often comes in middle life the necessity for an unaccustomed and most unwelcome parsimony.

Such a man finds that his habits of giving are to be restrained and his charities circumscribed: that the greatest care is to be given to small things: and that buying and selling are no longer to be treated as matters of indifference. Gradually a sense of sordidness seems to creep over the whole of his life. But the course he has undertaken must be persevered in for the sake of others, however much it may bring him under the comments of the world! that is, of his neighbours, who are the world to him; however much it may derange his habits; and however much it may militate against his natural character.

Trials of this kind seem to increase as civilization increases, and are especially rife in thickly-peopled and well-ordered communities.

I am very fond of dwelling upon the concrete—not talking always of virtues, vices, and miseries in the abstract, not seeking for illustrations only from large classes of mankind, but choosing individual cases, which have something typical in their character. Think of the terrible positions that there are in life amongst these individuals—of the leader, for instance, who knows or fears that all is lost, and who yet must maintain, not a gay presence, but what is far more difficult, an equable and cheerful bearing; and this too perhaps for days, weeks, and months. The general rides down the lines before battle, sitting erectly, looking cheerfully, uttering on all sides words of high encouragement. All the while he knows that he is outnumbered, outmanœuvred, and that the faint cloud of dust in the dim distance, if it indicate the approach of a new body of troops, cannot be succour for him, but may be reinforcements for the enemy. In his tent, he may for a minute or two bow

down his head over the wooden table covered with maps and dispatches, and, enjoying for that brief space the luxury of being honestly wretched, utter a deep sigh, and wish to himself that it were all over, and that he were in his grave, where he might never hear the hasty obloquy that will be poured out upon him for this unfortunate campaign. But now there is the sound of an aide-de-camp's foot approaching, and the general starts up again, bright and confident in appearance, and ready to issue clear and decisive commands. There is some grandeur in this position; but in others closely resembling it, there are sordidness and sinfulness, and every kind of abject misery, which yet must be glossed over or hidden by apparent cheerfulness and constant readiness of resource. The trader trembling on bankruptcy, the head or the moving personage in some great commercial concern tottering to its fall, what a part he has to perform! Cheering the dubious, encouraging the timid, overcoming the scrupulous, scattering everywhere hopes and expectations which he knows full well are for the most part fallacious or mendacious—what an agony of

acting is his! The bubble bursts, and on every side arise fierce objurgations, and just threats of condign punishment. Joining fully in much of this condemnation, I never can avoid thinking of, and taking into some account, the supreme wretchedness which the chief actors must often have endured in this sordid battle.

But take a case in which there is nothing to blame. Instead of being at the bottom of this amphitheatre (which, by the way, is not without gloomy suggestions of its own), imagine that we were perched upon some great height, as we were at Salzburg the other day. Hundreds of persons in the specks of habitations we survey must be cheering and encouraging others, and maintaining hopeful countenances, whilst hope is almost dead in themselves. The head of the family, or the consoling person on whom all rely, sits by the bed of sickness, and does not dare to show by the slightest sign the agony of fear that is within him. Men or women in such positions can even stifle, or breathe softly, the sighs which the oppressed heart must utter, but which none else must hear; and during weary days, and still more weary nights, maintain

hope, encouragement, and activity in a household that would absolutely droop and collapse without their presence.

Then, turning to quite a new point of view, take the position of a hypocrite, ofttimes an enforced position. He would give the world perhaps to be known as he is, and to be freed from the horrible burden of undue reputation. But think of the inconsistency of men's characters, and how they really are good and sincere and upright in one direction, and vicious, tortuous, and unjust in another direction. 'That which I would not, that I do.' Think what a battle such a man has with himself, and in a world which demands consistency, and insists upon completeness of character—in others; and, if it discover any streaks of black, is apt to believe that there is and never has been any white.

Then take the position, not abject, nor sinful, but very heartbreaking, of the man of wide insight, foresight, and knowledge, who knows what should be done in great matters, but is almost powerless to control them, and passes his life in remonstrances and endeavours to enlighten others, being all the time obliged

perhaps to carry into execution small and incomplete measures which he knows will be ineffective. Such a man is but too apt to become soured and censorious, and at last perhaps to give up the aims of his life in sheer despair.

I have not touched upon the wretched positions of those persons who have to teach what they do not thoroughly believe; or of those persons who are so combined with others that they cannot separate from them, and yet are perpetually grieved at the courses they are compelled by their partners to adopt; or the positions of those persons who go through life surrounded by an atmosphere of uncongeniality. Considering all these things, how true we find that proverb to be, 'that there is a skeleton in every house:' and, as far as I have observed, it is generally a skeleton which requires to be fed and clothed—a skeleton not merely unproductive, but consuming.

Finally, I will carry the war into the heart of the enemy's country, and will ask what are the consolations of men,—of all at least but pious men? For in these consolations may be discerned the depth of their misery. A wise man

in abject want was eating some garden stuff which he had picked up; and he said to himself, 'surely there is no one in the world more poor and wretched than I am;' and he turned round and beheld another wise man eating the leaves which he had thrown away.* Such are the consolations of mankind. They are told, when they are miserable, that some one is still more miserable, or they are informed by their friends, Job's comforters, that all their misery has been brought upon themselves by their own doings, which is like thrusting thorns into sores by way of healing: or that it does not matter much what happens in a world which is so confused, where life is brief, where no-

* This is taken from Calderon, a writer for whom it is evident that Mr. Midhurst has a peculiar affection. Milverton afterwards pointed out the passage to me, which I subjoin.

'Cuentan de un sabio, que un dia
Tan pobre y misero estaba,
Que solo se sustentaba
De unas yerbas que cogia.
Habrá otro (entre si decia)
Mas pobre y triste que yo?
Y cuando el rostro volvió
Halló la respuesta, viendo
Que iba otro sabio cogiendo
Las hojas que él arrojó.'

La Vida es Sueño, Jorn. 1.

thing is certain for a day or even for an hour, and where no lot is to be envied because of the secret griefs and terrors which beset even the most felicitous of men.

These and the like are your consolations, and upon them alone I might have rested to prove my assertions touching the deep, extensive, varied, and consuming misery of mankind.

When Mr. Midhurst had finished reading, Ellesmere drew a long breath, as if he were much relieved by the essay having come to an end; and, looking round at Milverton, signed to him to begin his reply. But Milverton was silent. Ellesmere then looked significantly at me; but I did not feel competent to undertake, at a moment's notice, such a task as setting up the felicity of mankind against all the weight of dolour with which Mr. Midhurst had dragged it down. I, therefore, made no response to Ellesmere's signs of encouragement. The girls looked quite down-hearted. Walter alone maintained his equanimity, whistling and rattling marbles in his pocket. At last Milverton spoke.

MILVERTON. I could say something at once in answer to Mr. Midhurst; but I think it would be better to wait a little, and would be more respectful to an essay of such gravity not to attempt an immediate answer to it. Let me have the manuscript. I will take a walk with it, and if it does not crush me and I come back alive, I shall have something to say against it, perhaps, in the evening. I certainly should wish to have something to say against it, for I do not at all agree with it.

We willingly assented to this proposal, and agreed to have our conversation in the evening in our own room. As we walked away, Ellesmere said to me:—'An excellent move that of Milverton's. We should have been crushed by Rasselas-Falstaff, if we had attempted an answer then. Besides we will have the room very cheerful—the red curtains drawn, a blazing wood fire (it is chilly to-day), and plenty of light. These little things tell. I really hope that Milverton may be able to say something worth hearing in reply; for, upon my word, such views as Midhurst's depress one; and he is evidently sincere, and really does hold them. It was not like a schoolboy's theme.

By the way, the only cheering thing during the reading of the essay was to see that boy Walter's utter indifference to all the miseries that were to come upon him when he has grown up—

> 'Alas! regardless of their doom,
> The little victims play.'

Walter's chief thought was when it would all end; and his amusement was to tickle his father and me with a long straw, which he cunningly withdrew, looking perfectly unconscious whenever we turned round. His father never found him out. I could not help thinking the boy's proceedings were a droll commentary upon the essay. It is just what half the world are about, amusing themselves and annoying others with straws, not knowing or not caring for all the fulminations that dolorous men like Midhurst are pouring forth against the miserable circumstances of life. That boy is a very important addition to our party. He is a representative character. He represents a large portion of the outer world. You do not like boys: you have not the requisite animal spirits to bear with them. I declare I am quite concerned to think how dull

Walter will be all the evening while we are discussing the essay. However, he will read about birds' eggs—there again, just like half the world, amused with something not far removed from bird's-nesting, regardless of the solemn growl of philosophic thunder. It is very fortunate that it is so.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE NOT SO MISERABLE, AFTER ALL.

THE room was made to look very cheerful. It was quite droll to see Ellesmere bustling about, and taking pains to arrange everything to the best advantage, like the lady of a house giving the finishing touches of adornment just before company is coming. He brought a glass of wine to Milverton, who was in a corner poring over the manuscript of the essay, and who looked up rather amazed at this unusual attention from Ellesmere. Then we sent to Mr. Midhurst, to tell him we were ready. As he entered the room, Ellesmere whispered to me, 'Hang the fellow; there is a solemn radiancy about him. He thinks he has crushed us; and that is the delight of these gloomy people. That is their happiness. I have a great mind to tell him so.' When Mr. Midhurst had sat down, Milverton asked

us if we were all ready and inclined to listen, and receiving our assent, began at once in the following manner.

MILVERTON. Well, we have heard this essay. Of its eloquence it would be presumptuous in me to speak, or of its experience of life, otherwise than with great respect. But all along I have been thinking of the well-known and profound remark of Goethe: —'How can a man jump off from his own shadow?' Mr. Midhurst has given us an extraordinary picture composed of shadows only. Now I ask, where are the objects which throw these shadows? and I am instantly reminded of the joyous objects on which full light plays, of honest ambition, of noble toil, or even of ignoble toil, of affection, of kith and kin, and even of the visible and physical pleasures of animal life, of the higher delights of those pleasures in which sensuousness is combined with intellectual perception, of the delights of the eye, the joys of the ear, and rising higher, of the pleasures in the exercise of the pure intellect, which, say what you like, are known in some measure to the rudest of mankind.

ELLESMERE (aside). Well done: we have one utterer of flowing pompous sentences set against another. I begin to breathe again.

MILVERTON. Mr. Midhurst has darkened, not to say exaggerated, every sorrow of which human life

is capable, and at the same time he has made out man to be the poorest creature that can be imagined, the victim of every chance, and of every trivial circumstance. In this poverty of being is there no security? What does Sir Thomas Browne say:—'To weep into stones are fables, and sorrows destroy us or themselves.' When there comes a greater soul than ordinary, more liable to be buffeted by long-continued sorrow, there is the strength to bear it. What does Medea, say when it is asked her, 'husband, countrymen, wealth, all gone from you, what remains?' Her answer is, 'Medea remains.' '*Medea superest:*'*—and Marie Antoinette writes:—'I count upon my own courage rather than upon the course of events.' 'If I tremble, it is from cold,' exclaims the great mathematician Bailly, when led to the scaffold. 'We advanced,' says General Foy, 'to Waterloo as the Greeks did to Thermopylæ; all of us without fear, and most of us without hope.'

MR. MIDHURST. Well, I cannot see much in what you urge. The fact of suffering is not removed because the sufferer has a fine saying to say about it.

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* '*Nutr.* Spes nulla monstrat rebus adflictis viam.
Med. Qui nil potest sperare, desperet nihil.
Nutr. Abiere Colchi; conjugis nulla est fides;
Nihilque superest opibus e tantis tibi.
Med. Medea superest; hic mare et terras vides,
Ferrumque et ignes et deos et fulmina.'
SENECA, *Medea*, Act. II. v. 162, 167.

ELLESMERE. I differ from you. I think the suffering may be diminished by a fine saying that one's self has said. The fine saying would not comfort me, but I dare say it would comfort these heroic souls: and Milverton's point was, that those great souls who have large capacity for sorrow have also unusual gifts of heroic endurance.

MR. MIDHURST. So you, too, are ranged against me. I shall have a hard battle to fight.

MILVERTON. Before a thorough answer can be given to some parts of Mr. Midhurst's essay we must look a little into the nature of being. The present is inappreciable from its fleeting nature. We live chiefly, it will be admitted, in the future or the past. Now all past sorrow has a tendency to transform itself into something else. All sorrows, follies, and errors have their edges wonderfully softened off by retrospection: they become possessions rather than detriments. We see this strikingly in the loss of a child. We pity the bereaved parents greatly; and if suffering deserves pity, they deserve it. But those are more to be pitied who never had a child. I do not believe that anything is lost in the spiritual world any more than in the material; and it would not surprise me to discover in some future state that we have each had the exact amount of misery and trouble in this state that was requisite for our natures. If there ever was a man in the world for whom the world in the fulness of its gratitude would have

wished all honour, happiness, and credit, whose old age delighted nations would have been glad to soothe, whom those near him doted upon, and those far off, who knew anything about him, could not but admire —that man was Sir Walter Scott.

DUNSFORD. Quite true. I never can read that last volume of Lockhart's life of him (and I have read it many times) without finding the tears unpleasantly near my eyes.

MILVERTON. Well, I was going to say that, loving and honouring him as much as it is possible to love and honour any man whom one has not closely known, I yet would not wish him to have been without the sore troubles so beautifully commemorated in that last sad volume relating his well-spent life. I feel that those sorrows were a possession to him and to the whole world. The steady, quiet, and humble magnanimity with which he bore those troubles—troubles that must have been particularly irksome and grievous to a man who was not deficient in pride, have endeared him more to me, and I have no doubt to the rest of the world, than his writing all those admirable novels, which, from their harmonious, discreet, loving, chivalrous character, have tended to raise the tone of thought in Europe, and are the best product to my mind that modern fiction has to show for itself.

ELLESMERE. I declare what you say, Milverton, is very true. Sir Walter Scott to me is one of the

first of men. I do not wonder that animals loved him. Sagacious creatures! How well they understand us men! Lavater was not so wise as a dog is (say Fixer) in his judgment of men's characters. Shall I tell you what I think one of the most beautiful things Sir Walter ever did? It is something which you would never guess that I should particularly admire.

MR. MIDHURST. Was it the interest he took in the dinner parties given by his children?

ELLESMERE. No: that is a very Midhurstian reminiscence of Sir Walter. It was his writing a volume of sermons. He could not give money to a poor young clergyman. He was in the midst of his own sufferings from grievous impecuniosity; but he added to his daily great labour by writing something which should bring a hundred pounds for this young man whose case he pitied.

Now that is one of those things which are tests of a man. It is like Doctor Johnson (dear old Samuel, heaven reward thee for it!) carrying to his chambers the wretched woman on his back, oblivious or regardless of the passers by, and comforting and cherishing her till she was able to return home.

But we wander from the subject, and must return to our pounding of this dolorous essay, for I am sure that Milverton has not half exhausted his store of consolations.

By the way I cannot help observing how artful Milverton is, as crafty as seven Old Bailey practitioners. He contrives to introduce a subject upon which we are all sure to agree with him, even Mr. Midhurst; and we forget what he said before. Then having warmed us up, as it were, and having got a glow of sympathy from us, he proceeds with his address to the jury in a seemingly triumphant manner. But official men are more crafty than lawyers, as I have often remarked.

MILVERTON. Well now, there is another point I wish to urge. I meant to have brought it forward when we were commenting on Ellesmere's memorable essay. You talk of success in life, that is, you, Ellesmere, do, for Mr. Midhurst always talks of failure. But I suspect you both fix your standard much too high. I think a man rather successful than otherwise who gets through life without becoming seriously amenable to the laws of his country.

ELLESMERE. Who is not hanged.

MILVERTON. Both of you will insist upon fancying some neat, well-devised, complete career, in which there is steady advance, and no ups and downs; whereas I look upon what you both call ill-success as one of the most needful parts of the career. I am convinced that it must be needful from its universality. I feel confident that suffering is not waste: and, if you observe, exactly the same kind of suffering that affects the highest careers, affects the lowest.

Some foreigner asked the great chemist Wollaston to show him his laboratory. He rang the bell, and his servant brought in a common round tray, on which were a few glasses and a retort or two. 'That,' said Wollaston, 'is my laboratory!' Probably each individual of the human race has to try for himself some considerable experiment; and some try it on a grand scale, and there is a noise of armies, fleets, and battles, a shaking together of royal crowns and dynasties,—and a name is formed

'To point a moral, or adorn a tale.'

But exactly the same experiment is tried in village life, amidst the lowing of kine, and other harmless rustic noises. That suffering is one of these experiments to be tried by all men I hold for certain. There is a beautiful passage in a modern tragedy, called *Athelwold*, which comes into my mind just now as bearing closely on the subject.

'In the young Pagan world
Men deified the beautiful, the glad,
The strong, the boastful, and it came to nought;
We have raised Pain and Sorrow into Heaven,
And in our temples, on our altars, Grief
Stands symbol of our faith, and it shall last
As long as man is mortal and unhappy.
The gay at heart *may* wander to the skies,
And harps be found them, and the branch of palm
Be put into their hands;—our earthly church
Knows not of such;—no votarist of our faith
Till he has dropped his tears into the stream
Tastes of its sweetness.

Athelwold. Wherefore this to me?
Dunstan. Because to spirits wounded but not weak
The church is more than refuge, it transmutes
Calamity to greatness.'

ELLESMERE. I begin to see that it is desirable that every man should have a lawsuit once in his life.

MILVERTON. Yes, I admit that the measure of human suffering is incomplete without some experience of law. Still these are the privileges of the rich. I did not say that all men were equal, but that most men had sufficient opportunities of suffering—the smallest persons as well as the greatest personages.

But, to resume the argument. You will admit that humility, tolerance, and forbearance are about the three best things that can be inserted into any man's character. Now I ask: how on earth are most men to acquire these good qualities in sufficient amount except through suffering and error, misfortune and sin? Of course you can answer me by saying, they might have been created humble, tolerant, and forbearing. I have no reply, putting aside revealed religion for the moment, but to say that you ignore and abjure all growth. Here is this landscape which surrounds us. You would have it always to have been the same: the great trees never to have been small trees, and everything to remain fixed and permanent. I can only say, that these are not apparently the conditions of the universe.

Well then you would demand another thing—that

all created beings should be equal. I dare say you will deny this, but your arguments, if pushed to their legitimate conclusion, will lead to it.

ELLESMERE. When you say 'you,' and 'your,' I hope you do not mean the plural you and your, (what a stupid thing it is, by the way, that there should be such confusion possible in our language!) for, without entering into these profundities, I am ready to admit that I am on your side of the argument, and if I said anything in my essay 'On the Arts of Self-advancement,' which calls for correction, I accept the correction. We do talk a great deal of nonsense about success, and what we call failure may often be the means of leading to success in the formation of character.

I must say for myself, however, that in my essay I was not particularly considering the character of the successful man, except in so far as it might promote his success. I believe I kept to my subject. I did not travel out of my brief.

MILVERTON. That part of Mr. Midhurst's essay, which I presume to think especially fallacious, is where he comments upon men's employments. It is easy to sneer at these employments, or even to show that they contain a great deal of folly and weariness. But to maintain that they are not the cause of high pleasures, great excitements, and of abiding satisfaction, is really going contrary to the whole experience of mankind. When Mr. Midhurst was worrying the affections, I felt that it was difficult to get the prey

out of his mouth. The affections aim at so much that there must often be signal failure, which a man, who takes the gloomy side, will be sure to make the most of. But all work is full of consolation. One thing that Mr. Midhurst overlooks is the immense skilfulness which is gradually attained (and note what happiness there is latent in that word gradually) even in the poorest and smallest of human employments. I dare say you have never observed the skill that there is in such a common thing as bricklaying. It takes a life to lay bricks well; and one bricklayer differs from another as much as one great artist from another. Notice the satisfaction, or the critical displeasure, which a common artisan manifests when he steps back from his work and surveys it. Do you mean to tell me, too, that a lawyer, a divine, or a physician, has not often the keenest pleasure in his work? Has a lawyer no delight in what he calls 'a nice point?' a physician, or surgeon, no satisfaction in what he calls 'a difficult case?' a divine no joy in successful persuasion or exhortation? And these pleasures are recurring pleasures, daily pleasures, which are not counted as pleasures, and are all the more so for that.

Well, then, as to various clerkly and routine work, is there not much difference even in this work? No man attains the habit of accuracy without a great deal of discipline. And, besides, is there not an exceeding satisfaction in being trusted, and believed in, and looked up to as an authority. The human

being who was most absorbed in his work, of all whom I ever knew, was one whose business it was to register and put away papers in a public office. This seems dull work enough, but no shepherd ever took more care of his flock, distinguishing them by the slightest mark of difference, than this good man did of the official papers endlessly pouring in upon him day after day; and he was never cross whatever you asked him to produce. I think he liked a difficulty, such as being asked about a paper of the year 1797. Mr. Midhurst would have pitied this clerk, and would have uttered grand and disdainful sentences to show the poor nature of the work; but never would there have been less occasion for pity or disdain.

Again, it is very well to depreciate men's specialities, and to make out that they are acquired in very little time; but they are mostly the result of great labour, are in themselves a considerable triumph, are particularly pleasurable as being characteristic, and on each occasion of their being exercised afford new delight. An artist has cultivated with care a natural gift for taking likenesses well. Do you mean to say that he ever exhausts that faculty, that its exercise becomes monotonous? Each new sitter is a new world of observation to him.

I observe, Mr. Midhurst, that you said nothing about the pursuits of scientific men. You must own that the basis of their work is nature: and, if you

have had any dealings with them, you must admit that they find endless joy in their occupations.

By the way, I must here make an especial protest against Mr. Midhurst's attack upon medical men. I must say out my say about them, if I only do so once in my life. They are, according to my experience, the most humane, tender, and considerate men we have. Everywhere they go about consoling, healing, amending. I have never met in any class such tenderness for the poor, and such active benevolence towards them, as amongst medical men. This is not a peculiarity of this age. When you study the memoirs of past times, you always find that there were eminent medical men in whom all their patients greatly confided, and who were foremost in the good works of their day. The names of Mead, Heberden, Arbuthnot, Jenner, Hunter, will at once occur to you. Then, as to the extent of their pursuits, there are no men who are less limited in that respect. They go on observing, seeking, and imbibing information from all quarters to the end of their lives. I will give you a curious instance, which I believe to be not a singular one, of their width of pursuit.

I went to consult one of the most eminent physicians of the day. Among other things that he advised me was to give my mind very much to country pursuits.

Taking up the *Gardener's Chronicle*, he said, 'I study this every week; it is a great pleasure to me.'

'Well, but you have no garden,' I replied. 'No,' he said, 'but I like to know what is going on in gardening, and I read this regularly.'

It is not only in studies connected with nature that medical men are unremitting. They take the greatest interest in human affairs generally; and no kind of knowledge seems to come amiss to them. They have, therefore, all the happiness which is to be found from having a very wide circuit of interest in the affairs of the world, both physical and moral.

ELLESMERE. Medical men are certainly most intelligent persons. They dislike us lawyers, I suspect, because we often succeed in bothering them thoroughly when we get them into a witness box; but I do not return their dislike.

MILVERTON. Well, then, as to artists. Must it not be allowed that you find amongst sculptors and painters most agreeable persons of highly-cultivated minds—often with but a limited amount of information, which is a necessary consequence of such an absorbing pursuit as theirs, but who make what they do know go very far? A friend of mine, who has seen a great deal of the world, says that it is so pleasant a thing to sit to R——, an eminent painter of our day, that it would be worth while, he says, to be a celebrated man, in order to have an excuse for many pictures of one being painted, so that one might have the pleasure of spending many hours in company with the before-named artist. However, it is not about

their being agreeable that we have to talk, but about their pursuit being a happy one. Ellesmere, who is a great admirer of Hazlitt's writings, will remember what he says of the pleasures of painting—how it has the charm of a manual as well as of an intellectual pursuit. Besides, artists often rise to eminence when, comparatively speaking, young men; and to their pleasant studios throng the eminent men of the previous generation, with whom they have the most familiar conversation, and thus enjoy one of the chief advantages of greatness without the trouble of it.

I could go through the whole list of men's employments, and I should not fear to take issue with you upon any one of them—the humblest, the most noxious, or the most apparently deplorable. What could I not have said for the occupation of the agricultural labourer, or even for the factory hand in a mill, who, amidst the general clang and bustle, finds a great deal to amuse him, and much more skill to exercise than you would at first imagine?

No: you may pull down friendship, you may ridicule love, you may make out relationship to be a grievous and a dolorous tie; but you will never persuade the working men of the world that they do not contrive to obtain a large amount of joy and consolation out of their work, whatever it may be.

DUNSFORD. I quite agree with you.

BLANCHE. I am sure my cousin is right.

ELLESMERE. Miss Blanche's opinion upon the

point in question is most valuable; because, if crochet-work can fill the mind, and make it happy, there may be some chance for law. Milverton has just told us that one bricklayer is a much better workman than another: is there any difference in feminine work? One flimsiness seems to me much the same as another.

MILDRED. I doubt whether Sir John Ellesmere's opinions upon law matters differ more from the youngest barrister's than ——

ELLESMERE. One design in needlework does from another. But then, these designs are doubtless made by men.

But, without going further into the matter, I have no doubt that Milverton is right. Work is the greatest comfort left to us.

MR. MIDHURST. Well, I certainly have had to address an audience not much prejudiced in favour of what I could say. You all seem to me devoted optimists—at least for this particular occasion, by special desire.

ELLESMERE. It all depends upon dinner. I took care to feed them well, and people in good condition are not easily to be brought down to the low level of pessimism. Proceed, Milverton; and prove everything in life to be pleasant, even a moist picnic with quarrelsome companions, and the bread and salt forgotten.

MILVERTON. Mr. Midhurst was very great in the

ridicule which he cast upon the plans and projects of mankind, or rather I should say, of individual men. But though the individual may perish, mankind does not; and amidst the innumerable projects which the individual devises, though some are dropped, some are carried on by other men to a successful termination.

The truth is, Mr. Midhurst, who has been much in the East, seems to have imbibed some of the Bhuddist notions, and would have us all seek after Nirvana, as the one chief good.

ELLESMERE. What on earth is 'Nirvana?'

MILVERTON. It would take a long time to explain to you thoroughly the full meaning of the word; but I may briefly say, that it is a state of being which the perfected man arrives at from perceiving that all doing, having, and being is a delusion. It is one of the most remarkable things I know, that this should be the principal doctrine of the religion which numbers most votaries in the world. For, as I dare say you are aware, the Bhuddists outnumber not only the believers of any other creed, but those of all creeds put together. I dare say the common people do not know much about 'Nirvana,' but nevertheless it is the sum and substance of Bhuddism. And a dreary creed it certainly presents.

DUNSFORD. Purely shocking! it tries to affix a stigma upon creation.

ELLESMERE. It does seem marvellously absurd;

but I cannot believe that it is the creed of the common people. I wish we had a Bhuddist here. I always like to hear what people who are accused can say for themselves. Let us vote that Mr. Midhurst is a Bhuddist, and cross-examine him.

MR. MIDHURST. Milverton endeavours to fix their dogmas upon me as mine. I shall not take up the character he would assign to me. I agree, however, with Sir John, that I should like to hear what they would say for themselves.

ELLESMERE. Have you anything more to say, Milverton, proving that this pessimist is all wrong, and should be made happy (the greatest punishment to him) at all hazards and all costs?

MILVERTON. I am set up as an advocate to oppose Mr. Midhurst on this occasion, but I am sure I can conscientiously say that I have not opposed him hitherto in any way contrary to my own belief. If, however, I were to contend against what he said about jealousy, though even that he carried to an excessive height, I should be insincere. It is most vexatious to see the business of the world and its pleasures so much hindered as they are by petty envies and jealousies, mostly springing out of a disordered vanity.

Mr. Midhurst spoke of Hume's notion about something being added to human nature which would greatly improve it. If these small jealousies could be subtracted from human nature, it seems as if the

world would at once advance two thousand years. I have always thought that something might be done by education to subdue and restrain these mean passions, whereas, on the contrary, by the excessive stimulus we often give to emulation, we run some risk of increasing them. I really do think that if people could not, according to Mr. Midhurst's expression, be made to see the beauty of being second or third in any contest, at least they might be made to see the beauty of being contented with being second or third. At any rate we must admit that Mr. Midhurst has put his finger upon a considerable blot; and all I can venture to say in reply, is that the evil might perhaps be much modified by an improvement in education.

ELLESMERE. This is skilful, Milverton: you should always agree with your adversary on some small point. It gives a great appearance of candour: we often do it in Parliament. Proceed.

MILVERTON. It is a curious thing, but Mr. Midhurst avoided any allusion to relationship.

MR. MIDHURST. So I did; but it was not from feeling that it was a weak point. Has it not been said that a man's worst enemies are those of his own household? And I need hardly remind Milverton, so versed as he is in Spanish proverbs, of a Spanish proverb that says:—'To him who has sons, or sheep, vexations will never be wanting.'* A friend of mine

* *Quien tiene hijos o ovejas no le faltan quexas.*

who has brought up a large family, every one of whom has been successful, is yet wont to say:—'Sir, they are one corroding care, from the moment of their birth to the moment of your death.' What says Jeremy Taylor on this point? 'He is born in vanity and sin; he comes into the world like morning mushrooms, soon thrusting up their heads into the air, and conversing with their kindred of the same production, and as soon as they, turn into dust and forgetfulness: some of them without any other interest in the affairs of the world, but that they made their parents a little glad, and very sorrowful.'

MILVERTON. These are very dolorous sayings, and there is a good deal of truth in them, no doubt. But weigh the matter fairly, and the balance inclines the other way. Relationship is not made what it should be, but it is an immense blessing. You cannot, by a few gloomy sayings, dispose of the long course of pleasure, hope, sympathy, and joy that there is in such relationship as that of a father to a daughter, a mother to a son, a sister to a brother, an uncle to a niece. Fathers and sons often make but a poor business of their relationship, but when it is successful, it is perhaps the most successful. There is nothing more to be said upon these subjects but the common things which have often been said, such as, that we live again in our children. Why, the cats and dogs, if they could speak, would confute you, Mr. Midhurst.

MR. MIDHURST. Well, they have not got so much to think of as men and women, about the advancement of their families.

ELLESMERE. A mother-in-law, now, is a nice relation.

MILVERTON. That is a most unjust sneer, Ellesmere. I have always thought that mothers-in-law have been very unfairly treated. They are a stock subject for remarks in comedy or farce, of an ill-natured kind; but in reality I believe that the better kind of people often live very happily with their mothers-in-law.

Well, then, you talk of cares. What an uncomfortable human being a man would be who was without cares, or who had not a sufficient number of them. He would be like a creature who had got into a planet of which the mass was too small for his muscular power, so that he would hop about, instead of being justly kept down, by a sufficient amount of gravity, to his proper planet. I have said before that sorrows are possessions. So also, in their way, are cares. You may laugh at this, but there is more in it perhaps than you may think at first.

ELLESMERE. There is no getting over this man. He is as wildly bent upon making out everything to be comfortable as the other upon making out everything to be nauseous and wretched. Seriously, though, I believe Milverton is the less wrong of the two. Cares drive away *ennui*. Some man, either

in fiction, or in real life, has said somewhat humourously, that he found a comfort even in his debts, for he had always something to think of; and practically, you do not find that the men who appear to be fortunately placed—debtless, care-without, well-to-do men, with one child, or none—are so much happier than the rest of mankind.

You have made the best defence that you could for cares; but, to be candid, I do not think, Milverton, that you have been great about relationship. Mr. Midhurst seems to be rather triumphant over you there.

MILVERTON. Well, I will say something more then; and see if I cannot make a better fight.

I know that there is a great deal which is eminently difficult in relationship. Take the case of parents. Their lives seem to be spent sometimes in restraining and forbidding. I go out and see Walter on the water, in a little boat with crowded sail, and I have to call him in, and forbid the sailing. I next find him injuring my new gates which had just been painted. I have to forbid that. Shortly afterwards I catch him throwing stones at somebody or something which does not require to have stones thrown at it. Then he is wet through, and I am peremptory in insisting upon a change of clothes. All day long sometimes, in the management of children, it is 'don't, don't, don't.' One wonders that they can like one at all; but they do, and if they do not now, they will. I am but just

beginning to love my father (who has been dead many years) as I ought. How well I remember on some occasion, when he wanted to take care of me just as I do of Walter about the change of wet clothes, I was insolent,—not in word, but in thought. 'Could not I take care of myself?—Was I always to be interfered with?' &c., &c. But now I appreciate all his tenderness. I could go and do penance for those thoughts, as Dr. Johnson did, bare-headed, in the market-place of Uttoxeter, for his one act of disobedience to his father. Excellent Dr. Johnson! How he always comes up in any serious talk amongst Englishmen, and what a loving reverence we have for him, notwithstanding his combativeness in conversation, of which Dunsford, I know, disapproves, and I think rightly.

To go back to relationship. There is great comfort in the thought that, though there may be little troubles and disagreements, yet the tendency of the thing is to come right in the end. Walter pouts, and looks like an injured Walter, when I have saved him from a fever by this peremptory order to change his clothes. But the day will come when he will sigh and say, 'I wish I had anybody now who cared whether I was wet or dry, and who should prevent me from throwing brickbats injudiciously.' The same after-growth of affection pervades relationship. It is full of troubles, duties, responsibilities, over-familiarities; but in the long run it comes right; and every day, as they grow older, people become more attached to those relations

left to them, and discern that, after all, the burden of elationship may be heavier, but is far more tolerable than that of loneliness.

ELLESMERE. Come now: this is reasonably put; and I do think Milverton has made the best of his case.

MR. MIDHURST. Sir John has become a thorough partisan. I must wait till some other day, when he will all of a sudden be found on my side of the question.

MILVERTON. I am now going to give you a very odd piece of comfort, which, if I could work it out, would answer a good deal of what Mr. Midhurst has urged. Henry Taylor has said, that most men see in their lives the story of their lives. He meant it satirically (and it bears that meaning fairly), for he adds, that they are more anxious to make it a good story than a good life. Now, in this dramatic tendency of men, I see a considerable source of comfort for them. They throw many of their cares and sorrows, many of their failings and misdeeds, upon this dramatic being. In the course of life they often change the nature of the part. Now, they will play the part of a successful man. That fails; and then they take up the part of an ill-used, or neglected individual: and so, in a hundred ways, they vary the character that is to be performed, according to the varying circumstances. Perhaps this shows in us the consciousness of what Emerson would call 'the

over soul,' and how each man feels that there is within him something which does not quite correspond with the part that he himself plays—something that is greater and better than the individual, and which puts the individual off from it.

ELLESMERE. This is somewhat hazy, and smacks of Leipsic, Jena, or Wittenburg; but I must confess I think there is something in it: and probably there is no end to the adroit ways by which the soul of man contrives to adapt itself to the most terrible burthens.

MILVERTON. There is a little point which I must advert to, not that it is perhaps worth mentioning in such a high and general argument as we have been maintaining, except that Mr. Midhurst himself sometimes condescended to introduce some little detail of misery to darken his gloomy picture. If you remember he pointed out how amidst every two or three households there was one afflicted by some intractable creature who was not mad, nor idiotic, nor vicious, but capriciously irrational. This I admit to be a great burthen. But has he ever observed to how many households there is attached some helpful devoted person? Often this person is a woman, not beautiful, not remarkably attractive to the outer world, but singularly amiable and unselfish, who smooths everything that would otherwise be rugged in domestic life, to whom all come with their griefs and their little injuries and their difficulties, and who seems to

be sent almost providentially to enable the family to get through its troubles. Sometimes it is a maiden aunt, or an old friend, or a confidential servant; but such lay brothers and sisters of charity are to be met with everywhere, and they help on the world amazingly.

DUNSFORD. You never said a truer thing: and it is not in the least beneath the tone of the argument, or disparaging to it, to name such a fact. Even in my retired way of life I have seen many instances of what you mention.

I do not wish to meddle much in this argument, and as you know, I should treat it in a very different way from that which both of you have adopted: but I cannot avoid remarking that Mr. Midhurst seemed to give a very unfair view of friendship. It is not the custom of modern days to make an exceeding parade of friendship, but I do not believe that, on that account, the existence of friendship is altogether abolished, or that the good offices of friends to one another are less frequent now than in the days of Damon and Pythias, or of Nisus and Euryalus. I should be very miserable if I thought they were.

MILVERTON. Well, I believe I have several friends; but then, though I say it who should not say it, I think I deserve to have them, for I never ask them any disagreeable questions, never make any personal remarks, and always defend them behind their backs.

ELLESMERE. Do you mean to say that you can continue to like a friend who begins to differ a little from you in dress, politics, or religion; or whose fortunes diverge from your own?

MILVERTON. All these things, dress, fortune, and the like, are mere wrappages, and go for nothing with me compared with the substantial ground of a man's character. I neither like you any better, nor (which is more magnanimous) any worse, for your having had some success in life, Ellesmere.

ELLESMERE. You may talk of these things as wrappages, and affect to despise them; but they are very like the extras in school bills which are apt to mount up to as much as the principal charge. What a simile that would be for a common jury, composed of fathers of families! I really quite regret throwing it away upon you. But to return to the subject,—you know, Milverton, you would not like me as well and could not resist making a remark, if I were to come out dressed in what is called the height of the fashion.

MILVERTON. If I were to meet you, Ellesmere, coming down St. James's-street dressed as an Eastern dervish, I should make no remark at all about your costume, but should begin talking about the weather and the shakiness of the ministry, or any of those common topics which Englishmen delight to discuss at windy corners of the cold streets. Men hesitate before they give up such a friend as I am, who is

like a dog to them, their own dog, whose morning welcome of them is just the same, whether they have a leading article written for or against them in that day's *Times*.

ELLESMERE. Yes, I have always said that your sense of justice is completely swallowed up in friendship.

MILVERTON. I think you are mistaken. If I were in power, I would not promote a friend unfairly for the world; but I am not called upon to judge him at every moment. There is a great deal too much of amateur judging in the world, and I say boldly that I like to find a defender and not a judge in my friend. We have all a sufficiently hard battle to fight in life, and we fight it a great deal the better from feeling that we have a wall of friendship (if I may so express myself) which we can stand up against, and have only to think of the foe in front of us. If I thought that, in society, you said against Dunsford and me the sharp things that you say against us to our faces, I should soon leave off liking you, if I possibly could; and when you came to Worth Ashton, I should contrive to take you to a field I know of, where there are two or three remarkably cross, misunderstood bulls, who maintain a quarrel with the world in general,—having previously, without your knowledge, pinned on to your coat a red handkerchief. I would indeed.

ELLESMERE. I believe you. The ferocity of

people who live in the country is wonderful. I have no doubt that Dunsford would be an aider and abettor in this cruelty to a poor innocent lawyer, just because he likes to laugh at his friends a little. In London now we think nothing of this. However, I remember saying in my essay that a man who wants to rise in the world cannot afford much friendship, because friends often speak so ill of one another; so you see I am substantially with you. By the way I wonder if there is such a thing as feminine friendship?

MILDRED. Of course there is. It is one of the calumnies that you get up against us, to assert that there is not, just as you declare that we are great talkers, and I am sure one man, Sir John himself for instance, will talk as much as any seven women.

ELLESMERE. Let us go back to the essay. Miss Vernon is so quick and incisive that there is no safety in attacking her. See how Mr. Midhurst bears attack. Have you anything more to say, Milverton?

MILVERTON. Yes, I have one thing more. Mr. Midhurst throughout dwelt much upon the fears, terrors, and apprehensions of men.

ELLESMERE. You know the French proverb, '*Les malheurs des malheurs sont ceux qui n'arrivent jamais.*'

MILVERTON. That was the very point I was coming to. Surely we might derive some comfort from finding that nothing is so bad as we have anti-

cipated it would be, and that fully ninety-nine hundreds of the misfortunes we anticipate never come to pass. I must admit that we are wonderfully ingenious in the art of self-tormenting; but really a little wisdom and courage might lift us out of the reach of our peace-destroying ingenuity.

The turn our conversation has just taken reminds me of a story of my father's.

There were two very old maids, sisters, who lived together. A running stream passed under their parlour window. A friend came to visit them one day, and found them in agonies of grief. 'What is the matter, my dear ladies?' he exclaimed. They bridled up, smiled amidst their tears, which still flowed plentifully, and said they were two old fools; but declined to tell the cause of their misery. Their friend, who was their doctor, if I recollect rightly, insisted upon knowing what was the matter; and at last one of them confessed. '"Suppose," Bridget said to me, "we had both been married: you know, my dear, it might have been. And suppose I had had a little boy; and you a little girl; and suppose that we had both been dandling them at this very window."—"And suppose," said I, "some horrid boy coming by had made a great noise. You know how nervous we are, sister, at noises. And suppose we had both let the children tumble into the water."—"And suppose," said she, "they had both been drowned." Then we began to cry, for it would have been so

dreadful, you know.' Here the two old ladies commenced crying again, and the doctor had some difficulty in comforting them. Now I say that most of us are just as foolish as Bridget and her sister, and keep on supposing, and supposing, and supposing, and making ourselves miserable about grievances quite as imaginary as those of the two aged spinsters.

ELLESMERE. With your long memory, Milverton, you must have retained hosts of family stories, and I do not know that I have ever heard you tell one before, derived from family sources.

MILVERTON. No: the good stories of a family belong to the family. There is something sacred about them. You know how I hate, with an almost morbid hatred, all biographies except those of the greatest personages, and all publication of letters that can be avoided. This detestable publicity tends to destroy the sanctity of private life, which, after all, gives the chief enjoyment to private life. Now I can write anything in a letter to you, Ellesmere—the crudest ideas, the strangest fancies, the most immature doubts, because you are one of those humane and excellent persons who burn all letters, except those which distinctly relate to pounds, shillings, and pence.

ELLESMERE. Yes: I think it is a duty to burn them. I see now why you do not hesitate to pour out to me your wildest notions on the currency, on

fate, and on free-will, those probably being the three subjects upon which men write most nonsense. But give us another paternal story. I won't ask you again.

MILVERTON. No: I am firm.

ELLESMERE. Well, I will tell you one of my own family stories, though it must not be construed into a precedent, for I am a bad narrator. It is, however, so good a story in itself, and would read us all such an excellent lesson, that perhaps it is wrong in me never to have told it you before—considering too the hundreds of times it has been in my mind, and how much it has influenced me. It is about my grandmother. You recollect the old lady, Milverton? Milverton and I, Mr. Midhurst, were at the same school together when we were very little urchins.

MILVERTON. Recollect her, of course I do! Does one ever forget any of those good people who used to give us cakes and apples when we were boys, and regularly tip us every time we came to see them? I may be a bad man, but I am not such an ungrateful wretch as that. But, to tell you the truth, my recollections of your grandmother, though tender, are full of awe, occasioned by an implement she always carried with her. It pretended to be a parasol, but was in reality a long crook, upon which I remember, she used to lean with folded arms. I thought she could reach me with that awful crook at any part of the garden, because once or twice, when I was snugly

ensconced amongst the gooseberry bushes, I had felt that formidable weapon in my collar, and had been pulled up by it, your grandmother exclaiming, 'You must not eat those now, my dear; but the tree shall be saved for you, till the gooseberries become ripe.' Forget her, no! besides she was the most beautiful old lady I ever saw, with one of those delicate roseate complexions which you sometimes see in very *douce* old people who have lived a quiet and wholesome life in the country; and I utter this praise of the old lady's beauty irrespective of the gooseberries and the apples, and the tarts and the sixpences.

ELLESMERE. I am glad you have said it, for I should not, being mindful of that exquisite *mot* of Talleyrand's on a similar occasion.

MR. MIDHURST. What is it? I thought I knew every *mot* current of Talleyrand's, as all diplomatists are bound to do, but I do not know to what you allude.

ELLESMERE. A man was speaking largely about the beauty of his mother, when Talleyrand thus interrupted him, '*C'était donc, Monsieur votre père qui n'était pas si bien.*'

Observe the delicate felicity of the words '*donc*' and '*si bien.*' If he had said that the man or his father was ugly, it would have been, comparatively, a feeble story.

Well, but my grandmother was beautiful. She was moreover a portly dame of commanding presence,

five feet eight inches in height; and, unlike many tall people, she did not attempt to conceal her height by stooping, or any poor device of that kind, but stood as upright as a dart, and rather made more than less of herself. This is part of my story, and, to appreciate it, you must have before you an unusually tall and noble-looking woman, always dressed in a very stiff silk which, when the old lady was out of it, would, I imagine, have stood up by itself. By the way, I was not a great favourite with her; and it may serve to explain her character and illustrate the story, if I tell you the reason why. Little boys in my time used to be dressed very finely. Now there was an unfortunate suit of cerulean blue, braided with silver lace, which, for my sins, I was put into at about six years old. Now I was a very meditative little imp. I believe I never thought so well, or so closely, as when I began to think, when it was a new thing to think. One gets tired of thinking, as one does of everything else, as one gets older.

I did not, however, spoil my clothes in playing with other boys, but I did worse, I spoilt them myself by utter carelessness about them; and unfortunately, on an unlucky day for me, my grandmother discovered me clad in those detestable ceruleans, ruminating upon some difficult subject or other which vexed my childish mind, at the bottom of that semi-dry ditch, which was at the end of the garden, Mil-

verton. I have no doubt I was hauled up by that crook of which you retain so keen a remembrance; and I suppose I was well scolded, and I fancy that ever afterwards compassion and regret used to enter into her expressions of regard for me, when she thought of what would become of a boy who could go and deliberately sit down in a ditch in his new cerulean jacket and trousers, 'decored,' as Caleb Balderston would have said, with silver braiding.

In few words, she was a pattern of propriety not to say conventionality, of neatness, cleanliness, and fastidious orderliness. No wonder she had an affectionate horror of me, who have never been noted for any of these virtues; but it was affectionate, most affectionate.

My story goes back to an earlier date—before I had made my appearance in the world.

My mother made what is called a good marriage. At that time the theatres were in their glory, and my father frequently took his young bride to see John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons. They also used to go to the Opera. My grandmother lived in a cottage (which was washed about as often as a Dutch house), a few miles from town. My father and mother naturally wished my grandmother to partake their pleasures, and they called one morning to tell her that they had secured a good box at the Opera, and that she must come with them. The story will show that she never had been at an opera before, and I

doubt much whether she had ever been at a play. She consented however, and they all went together. My grandmother cared not a straw for music, but she sat through the opera nobly, quietly, and enduringly, as an old lady would do, who had seen a good deal of life, had buried two husbands, had had her troubles, and knew that it was her duty to sit patiently through a great many things that were uninteresting, or even disagreeable. Then, alas! came the ballet. She looked on at that for a few minutes; then she plucked her daughter by the arm, and exclaimed passionately, 'Anne, how can you look at these goings on? I am ashamed of you!' My mother, in terror, tried to pacify her. There was no getting away immediately: the carriage was not ordered till the end of the performance. My grandmother looked on for a few more minutes at the dancing houris; then, rising deliberately, she turned her ample person to the illustrious audience, and withdrawing a few paces, sat down with her back to the stage, and remained in that position to the end of what she called 'that wicked performance.'

Now, you know, none of us here present have ever done so bold a thing as that for conscience sake. Knowing the old lady well, I have no doubt that she suffered agonies before she resolved to take such a public step,—before she violated all the proprieties and conventionalities that were a large part of her

being. The Royal family was probably there. She must turn her back upon princes, dukes, and lords; she must offend her son-in-law, for whom, as a sensible, prosperous man, she had a great respect; she must wound and offend her daughter, whom she regarded with the worshipping affection with which such simple people regard their children, when they are much better educated than themselves. But the higher proprieties were imperative, and she must mark her sense of what was indecorous, let the world (to which she in general bent so humbly) say what it might.

I am a feeble and degenerate descendant of such a woman, but I have sometimes sustained myself in difficulties of a much humbler kind by saying to myself, 'John Ellesmere, you must in this instance make up your mind to turn your back upon the whole audience, as your grandmother did before you. It is very painful, but it must be done.'

By the way I must mention to you how my mother always concluded the story, which, seeing that it amused me much, she told me often. 'You may imagine, my dear, that your father and I never asked your grandmother again to accompany us to the Opera.'

DUNSFORD. I really am much obliged to you, Ellesmere, for this story about your grandmother: there is much substance in it.

MILVERTON. I think it is one of the most inte-

resting stories I ever heard, and it explains a great deal of Ellesmere's character, who is always protesting and turning his back upon the audience.

ELLESMERE. You were all horribly afraid, I know, at the beginning, that it was going to be a love story; and one really is so tired of them. I mean, some long vacation, to write a novel, in which everybody shall hate everybody else right through the book, in the first, second, and third volumes; and there shall be no making friends, even in the last chapter. It shall be about a trust estate, and there shall be a large sum of money in Consols, which shall be the heroine, and there shall be a great many trustees, and a great many cestuique trusts. It shall be profoundly interesting. People will sit up at nights to cry over it; and there will be a cheap edition too numerous to calculate, which will be sold at railway stations as a companion to that excellent little book of Lord St. Leonards'. I have even planned the gay-coloured covering, which shall be daubed over with wigs and gowns, and bags of money, and trustees drowning themselves. There will, however, I am afraid, be a great railway accident in consequence of this publication, for the very stokers will take to reading it at dangerous times. I am sure those stalwart fellows must be very tired of love stories.

My success in this new career will be so great, that I shall give up my profession. My next novel will be an agricultural one. A broad-share plough

will be the hero. There will be a great battle of scarifiers. There will also be some affection, not to say love, in this novel—that of a country gentleman for his live stock.

MILVERTON. To go back for a moment from your forthcoming novels to the story you have just told. I am afraid I should fall into terrible disgrace with your grandmother, and should get no more apples or gooseberries from her. But, the truth is, I am much more scandalized by the ugliness of ballet dancing than by its impropriety. I have not attended such a thing as a *ballet* for many years. The atmosphere of most theatres becomes pestiferous to me, about eleven o'clock. But I remember it used to infuse anything but joy into my mind, when I saw a poor creature trip down the stage resting its weight on its toes. I could not get over the sensation of what pain it must have cost to acquire that peculiar mode of locomotion. I admired the labour, and thought that it would have ensured success in any profession. A similar amount of labour would surely go far to make a Lord Chancellor.

ELLESMERE. Sir, you see before you a man who aspires to be both a Lord Chancellor, and a good ballet dancer. Why should not Queen Victoria have a dancing Lord Chancellor, as well as Queen Elizabeth?

Hereupon Ellesmere, who is very fond of

these antics, began to dance in his grotesque fashion. After this, there was no more sustained talk; and thus ended our discussion upon Mr. Midhurst's essay 'On the Miseries of Human Life.'

CHAPTER IV.

ON PLEASANTNESS.

I AM rather ashamed of this chapter, as I occupy too large a space in it. However, I suppose we should take with a good grace any honour that is thrust upon us. I always recollect in such cases Dr. Johnson's well known reply, 'Was it for me, Sir, to bandy compliments with my sovereign?' This was when George the Third had held a conversation with the Doctor, and had said something complimentary to him.

I will now mention how it was that I came to write the following essay, which was a most unexpected and not a very welcome undertaking to me. I do not find much difficulty in writing sermons for my rustic audience, who have no thought or wish to reply to me; but it is a very different matter to write an essay which is to be read to such men as Ellesmere, Milverton, and Midhurst, who are to

have an unlimited power of picking what I say to pieces.

It was the day after Mr. Midhurst's essay had been read. The weather was rough, and the ladies did not accompany us in a walk that we took by the side of the Moselle. We began talking of the essay and conversation of the preceding day. Milverton seemed, I thought, to have laid aside the advocate's part which he had taken up, and to agree more for the moment with Mr. Midhurst than I should have expected. I bethought me that their conversation was a little like that of two barristers who have been maintaining the extreme views of their clients, and not bating one iota of their pretensions while in court, but who walk away together and perhaps talk quite fairly and reasonably about the case. However, I will let them speak for themselves, as far as I can recollect what they said.

MR. MIDHURST. I dealt with you very mercifully yesterday. I did not say a quarter of what I might have said. I did not dwell upon pain, fear, shame, or remorse. Look at the apprehensiveness of some men. I cannot describe it better than by likening it to the timidity of a defenceless animal which has a

thousand enemies. You go into a wood, and sit quietly for a time. You hear a rustling noise, and see some timid creature that is unaware of your presence. You watch it. The most striking thing to notice is its constant terror. It nibbles a bit, looks round timorously, and is startled by the slightest noise. Its apprehensive eyes and ears are ever in movement. It knows the number of its enemies. It is like a thoughtful man.

ELLESMERE. Come: this is not fair. You did compare man to a lizard. If you begin to liken him now to a rabbit, or a squirrel, I shall uphold the dignity of man, and shall compare him to a jolly, laughing hyæna. Surely, we prey as much as we are preyed upon.

MR. MIDHURST. This is your way of defending, is it? Well, then, there is another topic I did not touch upon; and that is,—the length of time that all vexation, worry, and calamity take to work themselves out. You read or hear of something disastrous; and you almost fancy that it did not take more time to be acted and to be suffered than it does to be narrated.

MILVERTON. This is but too true: here you have made an excellent point. I have always felt that the great difficulty in writing or in reading history is to appreciate the length of time that adverse transactions occupied. A disastrous campaign is soon narrated; but the wearisome marchings and counter-marchings, the long sicknesses, the disheartening times of wait-

ing (perhaps in some unhealthy but well-fortified spot) for the approaches of an enemy, are not appreciated. In fiction, too, how difficult it is to give a notion of long-extended misery. In Macbeth how rapidly the action moves on; and it is not until you come to reflect, that you perceive the long course of abject cowardly guilt, of murder breeding murder, that the tyrant has had to go through; otherwise his weariness comes too soon upon you. So, in an ordinary man's life, you read of a time of ill-health, want of employment, pecuniary difficulty, discord with his friends or his followers, and the like. It is told in a sentence, and does not make much impression upon you. But this adversity took years perhaps to be surmounted. Your eye passes from eminence to eminence, whether of prosperity or adversity, that the man occupied; but the long damp valleys that he made his painful way through, or the deserts that he sojourned in, are not much thought of by you. There was little to be told about them.

ELLESMERE. Little is said also of the smiling peaceful plains which he passed over. Do not let us exercise our imagination all on one side.

MR. MIDHURST. Again, I did not make enough of mischance. I pictured one or two unpleasant positions; but I did not touch upon the numerous mischances which happen to all men. A poor woman has an idiot child, and she gains her living by needlework. This is a story I heard or read the other day.

The child was ill, and she persuaded her employer to let her take home some velvet, or rich stuff, that she was working upon. For days she did not quit her garret; but, unfortunately, one morning, having hid her work, as she thought, she went out on some domestic errand. On her return she found her idiot boy, with smiling self-satisfied face, occupied in cutting the velvet into strips; and he had been for some time about it, for the impoverished mother said, that it would take three months of her work to pay for the mischief done by the idiotic diligence of the poor child. I can't tell why this particular story occurs to me; but life is full to the brim of such things. They make anecdotes for other people, and furrows in the cheeks of the sufferers.

MILVERTON. It reminds me of the mishap of a dear friend of mine, an eminent man of letters, whose manuscript of a second volume of a great work, put away in a cupboard, was quietly consumed each morning in lighting the fire. I remember his telling me that it cost him the labour of fifteen months to re-write this volume; and that he attributed to this mishap a failing in his eyesight not yet recovered.

ELLESMERE. If I were to follow your example, I too could tell moving stories of flaws in title-deeds, of losses of important papers, and of slight mischances which certainly have proved hideous disasters. But Milverton gave, the other day, what answer could be given to these things, when he said, that all past

suffering is a possession. Rather large and fine words, to be sure! But still they are better than nothing. And there is some truth in them, you may depend.

MR. MIDHURST. All I want you to consider is the number and weight of misfortunes that beset mankind. I have no doubt that, sitting on this gate for the whole morning, we might, without pause or intermission, relate mischances and disasters of which we ourselves have had full knowledge, and they should all be such as have sprung from the most trivial causes, in which the sufferers shall have either drifted, or fallen, or been snared, into misfortune.

And then there is the fearful adjunct that the destroying worm, or fly, or aphis, always attacks the plant when it is weak; and so, when a man has met with one misfortune, he is in the most likely condition to receive another.

ELLESMERE. Ha, ha, ha! If that simile does not win Milverton, nothing can. I must divert you for a moment from your charming and light-hearted conversation to something that happened last summer at Worth Ashton. You know how all enthusiasts have the knack of impressing their enthusiasm upon you. Milverton was planting turnips, and could think or talk of nothing else. I became quite agitated about turnips. He had, of course, some wonderful new thing which was to prevent the devastation of the turnip-fly. The wonderful new thing was tried, and

up came the turnips magnificently. Milverton's heart was glad, and there was in it the 'pride that goeth before a fall.' One morning we went down to see the turnips—indeed what morning did we not go down for the same joyful purpose? When I looked at the field, I saw at once that it was all over with those lovely plants which had cost us so much thought and trouble. I hoped that Milverton, who is rather blind, would not perceive the fatal gaps. But what country gentleman is there, however indifferent his sight, who does not miss at once his dear turnips? That wretched fly has before now received some bad language from rough farmers, but I doubt whether it ever met with such an objurgation as that addressed to it by Milverton. You know his Brahminical horror of taking away life; but I do believe he would have killed a turnip-fly that day, if he could have met with one. He read commination services over these unwelcome creatures. He said they were like ignorant Members of Parliament, who can produce no good measures of their own, but can spoil those of other people—just as if it were the object of the turnip-flies to grow turnips. He compared them to the armies of despotic monarchs blackening the land as they moved along to conquest. At last, turning fiercely to me, whom he suspected of not sympathizing sufficiently with him, he exclaimed, 'Sir, they embody all law.' 'And physic and divinity,' I replied. Judge, then, whether Mr. Midhurst is not

skilful and lucky in bringing in the fly and the *aphis devastator* at this particular point of the conversation.

MR. MIDHURST. It is just what I said. Miserable as this world is, we have it not to ourselves, but are liable to fatal mischances caused by the meanest creatures which share the world with us.

But, to return to our subject. You must admit, what I began by saying, that I was very merciful in my essay, and did not dwell too largely upon the misery of mankind.

MILVERTON. Yes, I will admit that it is difficult to exaggerate the misery that is to be found in the world. Misery is often of such a composite character, so exquisitely compounded of shame, vexation, error, and misfortune. You took good instances, Mr. Midhurst, of men in miserable positions; but the catalogue that might be made is numerous and varied beyond description. Think now of the misery of watching the wasting away of a person working for you, to repair the ruin which you have greatly caused—not an uncommon position in private life. Then there is this circumstance to be noted, that oftentimes the qualities which lead to error, and bring on disaster, are those which make the individual feel the consequences of that error or disaster most keenly. If it were only hard, strong, coarse men that do wrong, and get into trouble, there would be a good deal less suffering than there is in the world; but it is often the sensitive, the imaginative, the generous, that

commit the greatest errors; and dreadful is the retribution for them.

ELLESMERE. I suppose it has crossed most men's minds, how they would like to have been cattle. [We were then close by a herd of cows.] Think of the delight of being one of these mild-eyed, peaceful, ruminating creatures, which pay no taxes, are never in debt——

MR. MIDHURST. Settle their quarrels without law——

ELLESMERE. Have no apprehensions of death, and are without regrets and remorse. Then, again, these happy animals have no kind friends, Job's comforters, to improve upon their misfortunes. If one of them breaks bounds, leads the whole herd after her, and they are driven back with blows and curses, she does not get blame from her companions. Let a number of human beings be in the same plight, and see what they will say and do to the unfortunate person who gave them the unsuccessful advice, or the bad example, which they were so ready to follow.

MILVERTON. What you said about Job's comforters is very true. When you tell a friend of your errors and your griefs, he is pretty nearly sure, unless he is a very wise and considerate person, to point out to you that you should not have done as you did at the beginning of the transaction—as if we did not all know that.

I must confess I have a little of Ellesmere's envy for

the felicity of cows, as creatures which can do no wrong. Indeed, when I see how much of each man's misfortunes arises out of his own nature, I do not wonder at a saying of an eccentric friend of mine, who declares that he thinks it is by no means an unfortunate thing to be imprisoned for many years, especially for the most energetic years of one's life, when one is likely to do most harm. I could not help thinking, when my friend said this to me, that he was unconsciously talking Pascal, who says somewhere:—that all the misery in the world has arisen from men not being able to sit quietly in a room.

ELLESMERE. In all this, Milverton, are you not sliding over to the other side? I thought you were Mr. Merryman yesterday, and now you are Mr. Doubly Dolorous.

MILVERTON. No: you interrupted me some time ago, and so I did not finish what I was going to say. After I had drawn that mournful picture of a man's watching another perishing in the endeavour to avert the ruin which he, the spectator, has mainly caused, —as sad a picture nearly as there is on earth—I was looking around to see what comfort could be given in such a case: and I saw that the only relief was in that large contemplation of life and nature which makes us recollect, with profound humility, that we are not altogether our own making; that we do not know what is good for any one; and that there must be something which will explain and justify and

transform into beauty all this suffering. Whatever may be said of the great controversy of free-will and necessity, it must be admitted, practically, that a man's will is often not by any means the principal factor in his actions.

DUNSFORD. These are dangerous topics. Shall I tell you what I have been thinking about while you have been talking to-day? and, indeed, the same thought occupied me a great deal while Mr. Midhurst was delivering his essay yesterday. Since men are so miserable, always say a kind word when you can, and do a kind action when you can: it may come in so opportunely: it may save a man from despair.

ELLESMERE. Upon my word, Dunsford, that is a very good saying of yours. It has a subtlety about it, too, which is not often connected with benevolent sayings.

MILVERTON. It is very humane, and very true. I remember an instance of its application to myself. I had been suffering from a great concourse of vexation and misfortune. You know how such times come upon us all. We are ill, depressed, disheartened, obliged to work, and our work is clearly unsuccessful. Other people's misfortunes come at the same time. Our friends then die or fall into disaster, as if they made a point of doing so at the time when we can least bear it; and at last you have had so much bad news of different kinds, that you are afraid of opening a letter. All the old wounds begin to ache, and your

former errors seem to take that opportunity for showing themselves in their full magnitude. Looking back, we wonder how we contrived to live through such a period of disaster and disheartenment. There is a time in most men's lives when, in a humble way, they resemble Job sitting amongst the ashes, drinking in the full bitterness of complicated misfortune. Alas, they have seldom Job's patience to sustain them in their minor calamities.

Well, I remember that there came to me then one day a letter from a man I knew little of, encouraging me to a great undertaking, and offering all possible aid and furtherance on his part for the attainment of a personal object of ambition, which he thought would be very dear to me. Now it was not dear at all. I would not have walked across the room to attain it; but that letter cheered me amazingly, and I set to work with renewed vigour that morning.

I am not fond of much introspection, but I could not help asking myself:—'What is it that cheers you? You do not care a straw about the thing which this man holds out to you. You will have a difficult letter to write in refusing his offer, and showing him that you do not think much of what he supposes would be a great felicity. There is, perhaps, some implied praise in the offer; but you have had a great deal of praise and a great deal of censure in your time, and have become as indifferent to both as it is

possible perhaps for any mortal to become. What is there then to cheer you?'

In the first place, the unexpected kindness, which goes for much. In the next place, the immense encouragement it gives you to see that you do not appear such a feckless, withered creature to another, as, in moments of despondency, you appear to yourself. You take refuge in that other's opinion, and say, after all, there are life and hope in me yet. The sick man is really very ill—no fancy about that—but the cheery doctor comes in, rubs his hands, talks of the weather, wonders what the division will be, considers whether the Ministry will resign or dissolve, if they are beaten, and in fact treats you so thoroughly as if you were getting better, that the ailment begins to drop off a little while he is with you. You cannot resist such a rush of life as the doctor has brought into the room.

Yes: Dunsford is quite right:—always say a kind word if you can, if only that it may come in perhaps with singular opportuneness,—entering some mournful man's darkened room, like a beautiful fire-fly, whose happy circumvolutions he cannot but watch, forgetting his many troubles.

At this moment we approached a little roadside chapel, in which there was an image of the Virgin, and where a poor man, his market basket laid aside, showed by his meek face and

contrite gesture the prayerful adoration that was going on in his mind. We passed him in silence; and, when we had got out of his hearing, Mr. Midhurst resumed the conversation.

MR. MIDHURST. You Protestants may say what you like, but the wonder is, not that these poor people have adored the Virgin, but that any of them were ever persuaded to leave off that adoration. Does not each man feel that if ever he has met with real pity and tenderness, it is from some woman—some mother or some sister? These poor people idealize all that, and find some one before whom to pour out a cry from the heart which they might hardly venture to express in the presence of a divine Judge, however omnipotent in mercy.

MILVERTON. It is very natural.

ELLESMERE. It certainly is. Even Dunsford must admit that.

DUNSFORD. Yes. I do admit it.

MILVERTON. And you would hardly like to see it taken away?

DUNSFORD. Not unless I could see a likelihood of something better being put in its place. But this is not the time, or the occasion, for entering into a discussion upon the difference between the Churches, Protestant and Papal.

ELLESMERE. We really have considerable merit as

friends. I suppose we speak as sincerely to one another as any people ever did.

DUNSFORD (not sorry to change the conversation). I saw the other day in an American writer a humorous account of the number of persons that take part in any conversation. He says:—'When John and Thomas, for instance, are talking together, it is natural enough that among the six there should be more or less confusion and misapprehension.

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I think, I said, I can make it plain to Benjamin Franklin here, that there are at least six personalities distinctly to be recognised as taking part in that dialogue between John and Thomas.

Three Johns . .
1. The real John; known only to his Maker.
2. John's ideal John; never the real one, and often very unlike him.
3. Thomas's ideal John, never the real John, nor John's John, but often very unlike either.

Three Thomases.
1. The real Thomas.
2. Thomas's ideal Thomas.
3. John's ideal Thomas.

Only one of the three Johns is taxed; only one can be weighed on a platform-balance; but the other two are just as important in the conversation.'*

ELLESMERE. Six persons only! There are many

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* *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, by OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, pp. 58, 59. Boston, 1859.

more. There is John's newspaper, talking entirely with the voice of John. Then there is Thomas's newspaper, talking with the voice of Thomas.

MILVERTON. Then there is John's dog, quite invisible to Thomas, but which bites John's legs whenever John is about to say something more than usually sincere. This dog is, what the world will say if Thomas should repeat what John says; and the ungainly animal exercises the greatest influence over the conversation, restraining it at all points.

ELLESMERE. I see that three people are a mob.

MILVERTON. Well, so they are, especially if they are mob-guided, mob-fearing people.

ELLESMERE. Has not Dunsford been brilliant to-day? It was he who gave us this capital quotation. He put forth that amiable aphorism which ruled the conversation ever afterwards. Let me see, what was it? Oh! I remember:—always say an ill-natured thing to a man when you can: it may come in at a time when he is inflated by prosperity, and may do him a great deal of good. Homely and obvious, but true! Altogether I say that Dunsford has been brilliant to-day—a happy compound of Machiavelli, Pascal, and Dr. Watts. Why does not such a man give us his views in a sustained and effective manner? We have never had an essay from him, and we must have one. If he likes to make a contrast to mine, he can write an essay on the art of sinking in life. But something of the kind we must have from him.

There was such a hubbub of entreaty, which was renewed in the evening, when the girls were present, who joined in the clamour, that in a weak moment I gave way, and consented to write an essay. I was the more easily persuaded, as I had not to hunt for a subject, the one I have chosen having often occurred to me, while I have been listening to the conversations of my friends.

I did not take a long time to prepare the essay, and I read it to my friends one morning, while we were sitting in the balcony of an hotel, in one of the small towns that overlook the Moselle, which was flowing beneath in a reddish turbid stream, having taken its hue from those red cliffs which remind the Englishman of Sidmouth and the neighbouring coast of South Devon. I have a particular affection for earth of that colour: it goes so well, as painters say, with the bright green herbage above it.

CHAPTER V.

ON PLEASANTNESS.

HERE is a gift that is almost a blow, and there is a kind word that is munificence: so much is there in the way of doing things. Every one must have noticed to what a large extent real kindness may be deformed and negatived by manner. But this bad manner corresponds with something not right in the character—generally some want of kindly apprehensiveness, which a pleasant person would be sure to have. I am going to give an essay upon pleasantness, a quality which I believe to be very rare in the world, to proceed only or chiefly from goodness of nature, and to be thoroughly harmonious with the Christian character.

People often suppose that fineness of manners, skilful hypocrisy, thoughtless good-humour, and, at the highest, a sort of tact

which has much worldliness in it, are the foundations for pleasantness in society. I am sure this is all wrong, and that these foundations lie much lower. A false man never is pleasant. You treat him with a falseness, bred from his own, in pretending to be pleased; and he goes away supposing that he has deceived you, and has made himself very agreeable. But men are much less rarely deceived by falseness of character than is supposed, and there is mostly a sense of relief when the false person has taken his departure.

Pleasantness is the chief element of agreeable companionship; and this pleasantness is not merely not a function of the intellect; but may have scarcely anything to do with what is purely intellectual. Now there may be such a thing as good society, when witty and well-mannered people, who do not care much for one another, meet together; but I venture to assert that society does not assume its highest form—is not in fact delightful—unless affection pervades it. When you are with people who, you are conscious, have a regard for you, your powers of pleasing and of being pleased expand almost indefinitely. It is not

merely that in such society you feel safe from backbiting, and can leave the room without any apprehension of your character being torn to pieces in your absence. It is not merely that what you then say and do is sure to be well received, and the least possible misconstruction be put upon your sayings and doings. But there is something beyond all this—something beyond the domains of logic—which produces a sunny atmosphere of satisfaction that raises your powers to the highest when you are with good and loving people. Now if this is true of society in general, it is probably true of more restricted companionship; and kindness of disposition must be admitted to be one of the principal elements of pleasantness in a companion. Of course sympathy insures a certain good companionship. But we have no right to expect to meet with many sympathetic people in the course of our lives. Pleasantness has a much wider, if a lower, sphere. The pleasant man to you is the man you can rely upon; who is tolerant, forbearing, and faithful.

Let us consider the hindrances to pleasant-

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ness. Fastidiousness is a great hindrance to the formation of a pleasant character. People who have every other merit are prevented from being pleasant persons by fastidiousness. Again, the habit of over-criticism is another hindrance to pleasantness. We are not fond of living always with our judges; and daily life will not bear the unwholesome scrutiny of an over-critical person.

Even refined manners, if they have reference only to the refined person himself, may be a drawback from pleasantness rather than an aid to it. On the other hand, that rudeness, which some people mistake for frankness, is never found in a pleasant person.

Flattery, even when there is a dash of truth in it, is hostile to pleasantness, for flattery is full of fear to the person flattered. You feel that the man who flatters you now, will, under a change of circumstances, be among the first to condemn you.

A singular hindrance to pleasantness in man or woman, and one that requires to be dwelt upon, is the habit of exigence. That last is not a common English word, but I do not see why we should borrow from the French a word

which may fairly be adopted into our own language. It is worth while to inquire a little into the causes that make people tiresomely exigent. This habit springs from many sources: from a grasping affectionateness; from a dissatisfied humility; from egotism; from want of imagination, or from a disordered imagination.

Let us take a common instance of its practical working. You are thrown into intimacy with a person by some peculiar train of circumstances; you relish the company of that person: and you two become friends. The circumstances change; and naturally, perhaps inevitably, you do not see so much of one another as you used to do. If he is exigent, he makes this a matter of offence. His dignity is hurt, his egotism is aroused, his affectionateness is wounded, and his want of imagination prevents him from seeing that this discontinuance of intimacy is inevitable. The truth is we are not guided in our companionship with others by our likings only, for companionship is greatly controlled by external circumstances. Peevish, exigent persons will not perceive this, and will complain about broken friendship until

they often succeed in breaking it. This class of persons must have affection proved to them; and by such a habit of mind they become exceedingly tiresome.

The foregoing is but one instance of the tiresomeness of exigence; but it is very multiform and varied; and for no given day can you thoroughly satisfy a person who has suffered this habit of mind to develop itself to a morbid extent, and who is always thinking whether he or she is sufficiently loved, honoured, and regarded. Such people make those about them timid and ill at ease from the constant fear lest they should give offence; and thus the chief charm of companionship is blotted or effaced.

It may appear to detract from the high merits of a pleasant person when it is asserted as very desirable, that he should have a good opinion of himself. He can, however, do without this good opinion of himself, if he have a noble constancy of nature, for he is then very apt to attribute a similar constancy to others, and is not prone to believe that he is the subject of any intentional slighting. The self-reliant, hearty, uncomplaining person, believing

that everybody thinks well of him, and means kindly by him, creates good and kind thoughts in others, and walks about in an atmosphere of pleasantness. To form a pleasant character it had better even be a little obtuse than oversensitive and exigent.

I might go on enumerating the many hindrances to pleasantness; and, with few exceptions, they would be found to consist in moral defects such as those I have just commented upon.

There is a class of unpleasant people often met with in the world, whose unpleasantness it is difficult to assign the cause for. They are not necessarily unkind persons: they are not ungenerous: and they do not appear to act or talk from any malice. But somehow or other they are mostly unfortunate in what they say. They ask the wrong thing, or they omit to ask the right. They bring forward the disagreeable reminiscence, the ludicrous anecdote about you which you would rather not hear repeated in a large company, the painful circumstance which you wish was well buried and out of sight. If you

have any misfortune, they rush to prove to you that your own folly is the cause. If you are betrayed, they knew that it would be so, and remember that they have often told you so. They never seem to know that there may be a time when they should abstain from wisdom, and abound in consolation. They cannot imagine that the poor unfortunate man is not in a state just then to bear all this wisdom. In fact, to use a metaphor, it seems as if they had supernaturally large feet, with which they go stamping about and treading upon other people's toes in all directions. You think that they can have no feelings themselves; but you find that they suffer as much as other persons when they have to endure people with natures like their own. They appear, if I may say so, to be persons of thoroughly awkward minds. But this alone will not explain the nature of such a peculiar class of individuals. After much meditation upon them, I have come to the conclusion that they are, in general, self-absorbed people. Now to be self-absorbed is a very different thing from being selfish, or being of a hard nature. Such persons, therefore, may be very kind, may even be very sen-

sitive; but the habit of looking at everything from their own point of view, of never travelling out of themselves, prevails even in their kindest and most sympathetic moments; and so they do and say the most unfeeling things without any ill intention whatever. They are much to be pitied as well as blamed; and the end is, that they seldom adopt ways of pleasantness until they are beaten into them by a long course of varied misfortune, which enables them to look at another's griefs and errors from his point of view, because it has already become their own.

I began by saying, how rare pleasantness is! Look round at the eminent men of any age: are many of them pleasant? Pursue your researches throughout society: the pleasant people will never be found to be so numerous as to fatigue you in counting them up. Then, again, some persons are pleasant only when they are with one companion; others only in a large company, where they can shine. Whereas, the really pleasant person is pleasant everywhere, and with everybody.

The most skilful guidance of self-interest, the uttermost watchfulness of craft, will not succeed for any long time in making a man agreeable. The real nature soon breaks out; and it is this nature that eventually makes, or unmakes, the pleasantness of the character in your estimation.

As a remarkable illustration of this, it may be noted that harshness to another person goes some way to destroy a man's pleasantness to you. Putting it at the lowest, you never feel secure with such a man that what he manifests to others, will not, sooner or later, be shown to you. To insure pleasantness, there must be genuine kindness and a respect for humanity. Indeed, I would go further, and would say, that a pleasant person is likely to be polite to a dog. I have no doubt Sir Walter Scott was.

If I were to attempt to describe a pleasant person, I should say that he must be imaginative, and given to exercise his imagination in behalf of others; as he will thus be disposed to make the best of everything and everybody. His confidence in the good will of others inspires them with a like confidence in him.

Moreover, he will be one who does not expect too much of human beings or of the world in which he lives. Many men, having begun by hopes impossible to be realized, vent their disappointment ever afterwards upon all those with whom they come in contact, and are anything but pleasant people.

A certain receptivity coincides well with pleasantness in a character; but this is totally distinct from a habit of mere concession which you feel to belong to weakness of character. Above all, there is a largeness of nature to be observed in the men who are remarkable for pleasantness. They may be irritable in temper; they may have plenty of failings and of vices; but they are never captious, tiresome, small-minded, small-hearted people. Consider Alcibiades, Julius Cæsar, Charlemagne, Henry Fitz Empress, Leo the Tenth, Lord Bacon, Shakespeare, Charles the Second of England, Bolingbroke, Louis the Fourteenth, Bishop Berkeley, Mirabeau, Fox, the late Lord Melbourne, Sir Walter Scott, Goethe, and Burns; and you will see that what I have said has some truth in it.

It is one of the most certain characteristics of a supremely pleasant person that he is at his ease in every society, is unembarrassed with a prince, and, what is far more difficult, is not uncomfortable with his own servant, if he is thrown into near society with him, as on a journey.

Lord Bacon, commenting upon diet, declares that there should be a variety, but that it should tend to the more generous extreme. That is exactly what should happen in the formation of a pleasant character. It should tend to credulity rather than to suspicion, to generosity than to parsimoniousness, be apt to think well rather than to think ill of others, looking everywhere for the excuse instead of the condemning circumstance.

A man blessed with such a character it is good fortune to meet; and speaking with him at the corner of the street enlivens the beginning, and cheers the end of a working day. '*Gratior it dies*' applies to the presence of such a person more than it ever did to an Augustus or a Mæcenas.

Now I maintain that it would be a very laudable ambition to endeavour to become a

pleasant person; and that it is not at all a work left for fools or for merely empty good-natured persons. There are many who are almost dying for fame, who are longing for great office which they will probably fill badly, who think life wonderfully well spent if they can amass a sum of money which they will not know what to do with when they have got it. I venture to put before them a new ambition — that of becoming pleasant to their fellow-creatures. It is a path in which they will not be jostled by a crowd of competitors.

It might be thought that women, who are excluded from some of the higher objects of ambition, would be especially inclined to cultivate pleasantness; and I do think that they are pleasanter than men. But still there are a great many hard, unpleasant women; and, judging from what little I have seen of the world, I should say that women do not cultivate pleasantness to that extent that might be expected of them. The reason probably is, that they make their circle a very limited one, and are content, I suppose, with being exceedingly agreeable in that circle.

I have been mainly thinking of that pleasantness (the only kind that I have any faith in) which proceeds from sweetness of disposition and broad geniality of nature.. But it will be instructive, as well as curious, to observe how rare it is that men are, intellectually speaking, pleasant,—in short how few persons excel in conversation. This man spoils conversation by asking large questions which have not been fairly worked up to in the course of the conversation. That man is too verbose, and talks in a parliamentary fashion. Another is too exhaustive. He takes every case that can happen. You see beforehand that there is only one branch of the subject which he is really going to deal with, or to say anything new about; and your impatience is not slight as he calls up and dismisses the various parts of the question which he is *not* going to enter into. Then there is the man who interrupts all good talk with bad jesting. Then there is the parenthetical talker—often an excellent, scrupulous man—who qualifies every adjective with a parenthesis; and if, unhappily he indulges in a narrative, scatters it into fragments by many needless explanations and qualifica-

tions. He is particular in fixing a date which has nothing whatever to do with the gist of the story. Then there is the utterly unmethodical talker, who overruns his game; who has come to the end of a story or an argument, before he has well begun it; and yet occupies more time than if he took things up in an orderly manner. Then there is the man who deals in repetition. Again, there is a large class of persons who talk famously, who have none of the defects before mentioned, who are bright in repartee, swift in rejoinder, terse in statement, and thoroughly skilful as combatants. But combat is what they love, and sophistry is what they clothe themselves in. You feel that it is a perfect chance as to which side they will take in any argument. In fact it chiefly depends upon what others have said, for these men are sure to oppose. When you are talking with a man of that class, you feel that if you had not taken this side, he would not have taken that. And if, just to try him, you veer skilfully round, you soon find him occupying the position which you have abandoned. Now, good conversation is not law, and you do not want to have it made the

mere sport of intellectual advocacy. I grieve to say that such a man as Dr. Johnson was one of this class, and with me it would have taken off great part of the pleasure of listening to him. On the other hand, in a conversation with Burke, you might have had what was lengthy, or what was declamatory, but you would have had the real outcome of the man's mind,—and that to me is what is precious in conversation. Again, turning to a new fault, you have very clever men whose opinions you would like to learn, but they are over-cautious. They love to elicit other people's thoughts; and, when you part from them, you find they have said out to you nothing of their own. They have paid you the ill-compliment of seeming to think that you were not to be trusted with their thoughts. Then there is the rash talker, often very witty and very brilliant; but those who sit round him, especially his host, are a little afraid each moment of what he will say next, and of whether it will not be something offensive to somebody. I remember an apprehensive host describing to me once the escapades of such a man in a mixed company, and ending by saying, 'I

thought all the time how I should have liked to have left them all there, and got at once into a cold bath in my own room.' Lastly, I must notice the self-contained talker, whose talk is monologue—not that he necessarily usurps the conversation—but that he does not call any one else out, as it were, or make answer to any one. He merely imparts fragments of his own mind, but has no notion of the art of weaving them into conversation; and so a texture is produced consisting of threads running in one direction only. He makes speeches: he does not enter into a debate.

I think I have shown from the above how difficult it is for a man to be, intellectually speaking, a pleasant companion. But so greatly more effective in this matter are the moral than the intellectual qualities, that a man shall have any one of these faults, or all of them combined that will admit of combination, and yet be a pleasant and welcome companion, if he be but a genial and good fellow.

An Eastern Monarch (I think it was Tippoo Saib), after stating succinctly in his letters

what he had to say, used to conclude with the abrupt expression, 'What need I say more?' So I too, having shown you that pleasantness proceeds from good qualities, that it is rare, that it is a worthy object of ambition, beg you all for the future to study to be pleasant. What need I say more?

I will reserve for a new chapter the conversation that took place after I had read the foregoing essay.

CHAPTER VI.

CONVERSATION UPON PLEASANTNESS.

ELLESMERE. This essay of Dunsford's is not a bad essay, though somewhat sermonesque. I have, however, a hundred objections to make. I will begin, though, by approval, as that makes one's objections go down better. What Dunsford said about the rarity of pleasant men is true. Indeed I scarcely know any very pleasant man but myself.

DUNSFORD. Well, I am glad that you know one.

MILDRED. To whom is this one pleasant?

ELLESMERE. To himself: and that is a great deal more than can be said of most men. But, seriously speaking, of course I know that I do not come within the pale of Dunsford's pleasant people. I am a little too sharp and too fond of speaking out my mind for that. I am out of the question. But, now, let us look at the rest. Milverton might be pleasant, and indeed can be so when he chooses, but he is too much absorbed in his plans and projects to be what I call a pleasant person. Half the time that he is talking to you, you see that he is thinking of something else.

How can a man be pleasant who is thinking about the quantity of bullion in the Bank, which, in our morning's walk to-day, he confided to me he had been watching with anxiety for the last three years? or how can a man be agreeable whose whole soul is generally given to some of the vexed questions of the day? The thing which prevents Milverton from being in the least degree pleasant at the present moment is the question of 'the equalization of rates.' If he could settle that question in his own mind to his own satisfaction, he would be a much more agreeable companion—at least for a day or two, until he had taken up something else to torment himself about. I think we have disposed of Milverton; and, in disposing of him, we see that to be thoroughly pleasant a man should have somewhat of a disengaged mind. This was not mentioned by Dunsford, and it is one of my hundred objections to his essay.

Then there is Dunsford himself, and there is Mr. Midhurst: they might be pleasant people, but——

MR. MIDHURST. Pray do not stop from any motives of delicacy.

DUNSFORD. Oh no, let us hear the worst.

ELLESMERE. But, to tell the truth, they have not animal spirits enough to be thoroughly pleasant people—another omission of Dunsford's, and another objection of mine to his essay.

Then there is Miss Vernon: she is decidedly too

satirical to be pleasant. Then there is Miss Blanche: she is too quiet to be pleasant.

Then there is Walter. It would be beyond measure ridiculous to say of any boy that he is pleasant. The restlessness of a boy is destructive to all pleasantness.

[I do not see, Walter, that you have disproved my assertion by knocking my hat over my eyes.]

No: Walter is decidedly unpleasant; as all boys are from ten to thirty-three, at which time they begin to mellow into manhood.

Then we come to Fixer. I have the greatest respect for that dog, but I cannot conscientiously say that he is pleasant. I am sure other dogs do not think him so: the look of him is sufficient to take away his claim to be considered a pleasant animal.

I have now gone through the whole company, and it does not appear that there is one pleasant creature amongst us. In fact Dunsford's pleasant person is a chimera, and exists only in Dunsford's mind.

MISS VERNON. Well, but there are unpleasant people.

MILVERTON. And there must be a positive corresponding to that negative.

ELLESMERE. Not necessarily: the positive in this case is an imaginary being.

As to what Dunsford said about women being pleasanter than men, it is sheer flattery. They have less imagination and less tolerance than men; and

how they are to be more pleasant in society I cannot conceive.

MISS VERNON. We may have less imagination and less tolerance, but who is it that say the ill-natured and unpleasant things in the world? Men. Not knowing, however, so much as men, we are not able to lead the conversation as we please; and if conversation is often unkind and disagreeable, the fault must be laid to men.

MR. MIDHURST. Miss Vernon is quite right.

ELLESMERE. I cannot attempt to contend with her, and so I will return to the discussion of the essay.

As everybody pleased himself and herself by making comments upon my style, when I wrote an essay, I shall not omit the opportunity of saying what I think of Dunsford's. The drollest thing about it was, his endeavouring to end his essay in such a way as not to remind us of the ending of a sermon. He fancied that I should have some impertinent remark to make if he did end it so; and therefore he rushed into an unaccustomed playfulness. As the all-accomplished Master of Trinity once said, he 'reserved a trot for the avenue.' Then, you know, between ourselves (here he lowered his voice a little), Dunsford is somewhat of a pedant; and, therefore, I think he may use such words as 'exigence' and 'function' not unbecomingly. But we could not do so. That word 'function' I have been longing to use all my life, in the sense in which

he used it, but I was afraid it would not be intelligible to a British jury.

MR. MIDHURST. Receptivity, too, is a curious word.

MILVERTON. A very good word! We all know well what Dunsford means by it. Now Blanche is receptive—takes in all you say, is not inclined to battle with it, at once gives it a hearty welcome. Ellesmere, on the other hand, is not receptive.

ELLESMERE. No: or a precious quantity of nonsense his mind would be full of by this time. But to return to the essay. Far the shrewdest part of it was where Dunsford pointed out the numerous ways in which men fail (intellectually speaking) to be pleasant companions. We all came in, I suspect, for a little share of censure there. For my own part I think I dislike the largely-questioning individual the most. There was a man in company with Milverton and me not long ago, who contrived to ask the four following questions in about thirteen minutes. I timed him. The questions were, 'Do you think after all that the battle of Lepanto was one of the decisive battles of the world?' 'Are you prepared to say that a conjoint standard of gold and silver is the best basis for our currency?' 'What do you suppose to be the real revenue of Russia at the present moment?' 'What are the grounds for maintaining that the aboriginal languages of America have any affinity to the Indo-Germanic tribe of languages?'

These pleasant little questions were chiefly addressed to Milverton. I was supposed to be too ignorant to know anything about them; and never did I rejoice more in the safe and comfortable shelter of a reputation for ignorance. I observed that Milverton always contrived to answer by reference. The anxious inquirer might turn to Haxthausen; might study Bopp, Tschudi, Trübner, and other learned Germans, if he were so minded; might recreate himself with Mr. Horner's Bullion report; or might read Professor Creasy's *Seventeen Decisive Battles of the World.* But Milverton said nothing of his own.

MILVERTON. Well, I assure you, that if I knew anything upon such subjects worth saying, it would not be from caution that I should not say it; but one has not one's opinions ready at a moment's notice; and I have the greatest dislike to talking vaguely and in a hap-hazard manner about great subjects. It seems to me a sort of dishonour to the subjects. Added to which, opinions are with me most valuable things. I arrive at very few of them; and am not more prone to talk about them than about my affections. I mean, of course, when the opinions are about such large matters as those above stated; for I agree with Dunsford that there is an over caution in conversation, which is very chilling and almost unfair to the people you converse with.

ELLESMERE. Yes: I have often observed that

diplomatists, fox-hunters, and men who are not unlikely to be made bishops, are very cautious in the expression of their thoughts on any difficult subject.

But now, Milverton, have you anything further to say about the essay? for, if not, I shall bring forward another objection.

MILVERTON. Yes: I have something to say, but it is not in the way of objection. I think that Dunsford has not exaggerated the merits of pleasantness, and I will tell you why. Consider the crowds that are passing in the daytime through the dense thoroughfares of some mighty capital. What a bustle it is, what movement, what ebbs and flows of men and horses, and, as the French call it, *roulage* (whatever goes on wheels) of all kinds! It seems very grand; but how trivial for the most part are the errands upon which all this flood of people is bent. To buy, to sell, to chaffer, to convey, to gossip, to make inquiries, and to answer them, constitute a large part of what the crowd is out of doors to do.

I am not sure that I have made you understand fully what I mean. Men are not always rushing about in war chariots just ready to begin some mighty battle—or arranging some great political movement which is to produce a signal change in nations—or meditating some singular experiment which is to give a new insight into the material world. The meeting with a little more or a little less of pleasantness might not affect persons engaged in such great

concerns. But the crowd are necessarily occupied in small affairs, wherein the modes, the manners, and the ways of acting are almost as important as the actions themselves.

Well now the moral that I draw from this is, what a good thing it is to be pleasant, for pleasantness does in no slight degree smooth every one of those thousands of small transactions which that busy crowd has to get through in the course of the day. An unpleasant man is a centre of vexation from which annoyances travel to distant quarters. Every one who has to do with him is likely to have his temper a little ruffled by this converse; and, if the unpleasant man be in authority, however brief and small, he can contrive to send home every day a great many persons whose tempers are not by any means the better for having seen him.

DUNSFORD. This is very true, and it throws a new light on my essay; for, to tell the truth, I was mainly thinking of pleasantness in society and not in business.

ELLESMERE. There is one point that struck me in the course of the essay, which indeed I have often noticed before. It is this. Dunsford made imagination enter largely into the composition of pleasantness. I have also observed that Milverton introduces imagination into all virtues. Now surely unimaginative people may be very good people.

MILVERTON. In a limited way: but for all the

higher forms of character you will find, I think, that imagination is necessary.

MR. MIDHURST. Imagination, you know, is a great mental power. It is sometimes used for good, sometimes for evil. It is often a considerable mischief to its possessor; but I must say that upon the whole I think it especially aids goodness, for it must tend to take a man a little out of egotism and selfishness; and I quite agree with Mr. Dunsford that it does enter into the composition of every man who is remarkable for pleasantness. Of course there may be a good-nature and gentleness which can show forth themselves without its aid; but it will even make a man pleasant, who might otherwise be very disagreeable, by enabling him on all occasions to see what is to be said and thought for others. It corrects harshness of judgment and cruelty of all kinds. I cannot imagine a cruel man imaginative; and I suspect that there is a certain stupidity closely connected with all prolonged severity of word, or thought, or action.

MILVERTON. The reason of reasons for cultivating pleasantness, as it seems to me, is that it makes life go happily in the small circle in which we live. Now, people talk of fame. What a slight thing it is in the way of joy or satisfaction, and often how mischievous! It exposes a man to a thousand nuisances and vexations while he is alive; and what good can it be to him when he is dead?

DUNSFORD. The magnitude of the universe, only

fully appreciated by the moderns, ought to have greatly checked aspirations after fame; and I should not wonder if it really has had some effect in so doing.

MILVERTON. But, look at present fame. The chief good of it is entirely reflex, to my thinking; and it is useful only as it serves to counteract the effect of familiarity in the household circle. A pleasant man can afford to do without it. Supposing Dunsford now were to gain great fame by his essay, and to become a noted man in America: what good would it do him? The Americans would think that they had shown quite enough favour to him in having read the essay. Indeed they would fancy, as all readers do, that the obligation is on their side. If he should become a popular author over there, do you think they will ever send him one of those canvas-back ducks which Ellesmere and Mr. Midhurst are always talking about? Not they. But the whole of Dunsford's parish would go out to shoot a canvas-back duck, if they thought his reverence longed for one, and there was a single specimen of that variety to be found in Hampshire. To be beloved in one's parish is an object worth attaining, and that falls to the lot of pleasant people.

ELLESMERE. The part of the essay that I liked best was what Dunsford said about exigent people. It is particularly true as regards friendship. It is dreadful to attempt keeping up friendship where one has for ever to be offering explanations.

MILVERTON. Yes, without faith, life would be spent in making explanations. It has been observed that almost all letters between friends, unless their friendship is of a very high order, commence with an excuse for not having written before.

There are, however, some beautiful natures that remain exactly the same towards you; and they neither make nor require excuses. You do not see these people for years; and they take you up precisely where they left you.

MR. MIDHURST. I must confess I did not at all like some depreciatory words which Mr. Dunsford used in reference to tact. True tact seems to me to comprise a great deal of Christianity, and I do not see why the word 'worldliness' should have been brought in as Mr. Dunsford brought it. I should think that 'worldly tact' would come under the head of that falseness which Mr. Dunsford declared was never pleasant. By the way I think he might have said something against obsequiousness. That never pleases, I believe, for long; I always shudder at it; and cannot help fancying, perhaps unjustly, that the obsequious man would be tyrannical, if his position were altered.

MILVERTON. There is one thing I must protest against, and that is, that falseness should be attributed to certain persons who are merely more obliging than other men. I have often observed that the world sets down as false, and characterizes by that

very ugly word 'humbug,' some man who, from softness, or excessive generosity of nature, or proneness to sympathize, is apt to promise and encourage largely—who, however, makes great efforts to fulfil his promises. I cannot explain myself better than by using figures. There shall be a man who promises sixteen things to sixteen different people, and makes a great effort to perform eleven of his promises. The five disappointed persons raise a huge clamour. There shall be another man, who not caring much for other people, and being skilled in the difficult art of saying 'No' at the right time and distinctly, holds out hopes to two people only. He gratifies one of them, and there is one malcontent left. But in the other case there were five; and, besides, the eleven gratified people were not sufficiently gratified, and are a little prone to join with the five malcontents in decrying their benefactor. I have seen this in political life.

MR. MIDHURST. And so have I.

MISS VERNON. The part of the essay that I liked best was where my uncle Dunsford spoke against the habit of condemnation, and said that the pleasant person always went to the more generous extreme.

ELLESMERE. Yes, Miss Vernon: satirical people seem to me to be nearly always in the wrong.

MILVERTON. I think that seriously of satire, which Ellesmere says satirically. Satire (as it is generally exercised) seems to me to be a one-sided

thing, to show such poverty of fancy in attributing one class of motives only, and that a bad one, to conduct which, if we could see all its causes, would be too complex even for the most accomplished metaphysician to describe, although he should have the whole map of motives laid out clearly before him. By the way it would be like a small, crowded map of a large country, in which the names of rivers, provinces, and cities are huddled together in absolute confusion.

I have often thought how wrong satirists may be when, in real life, or in fiction, they are attacking ostentation, or what they suppose to be ostentation —especially in hospitality. What they observe may depend, for instance, mainly upon temperament. Now, if I were a rich man, I should have my house always full: I should entertain the whole county if I could. I am fond of seeing people about me. Well then, unless I were to be very much altered by riches, I should still take a keen interest in politics. 'See,' would the satirical bystander exclaim, 'how that man Milverton courts the county: he has an eye to Walter's representing the northern division.' Now Walter and the northern division would be as far from my mind as it is possible to be.

MR. MIDHURST. I, too, like to have a great many people about me. The buzz of happy, or at least noisy people about one soothes melancholy, and enables one to be much alone without being lonely.

ELLESMERE. Depend upon it the satirist could find out a very bad motive for this. I think I see one. A man who loves a good dinner is often fond of having other people about him who love good dinners too. He is ashamed to sit down to a haunch of venison by himself.

MILVERTON. The most jovial thing I know of is to give a great party to the poor—to see the way in which they do enjoy it, coming at the earliest moment and going away at the latest, eating nobly and disporting themselves without reserve—after a cricket-match or something of that kind.

ELLESMERE. Ah, sir, I see you are fond of popularity-hunting.

MILVERTON. I am now going to follow on cousin Mildred's side. She liked that part of Dunsford's essay which made the pleasant person not fond of condemnation. I go further, and think a pleasant person is seldom one who bores much into character, and is always commenting upon it. The other day I was reading something about Charles the First; and it suddenly occurred to me, that after all I had read at various times of my life upon that king's character, I did not really know much about him. Now, there is a man who has been as much pried into as any human being, yet probably we have not got half way down into his character. So much for the value of our comments!

To go back, however, to Dunsford's pleasant person,

I think he should be one who takes people as he finds them, and is not inclined to be inquisitive. I believe that he will not, on this account, be a bit less wrong than very shrewd searching people often are. His may be a shallow view; but theirs are often only deeply erroneous; and there is so little time in the world for a sound investigation into character or conduct that we had better for the most part leave it alone.

ELLESMERE. I declare this is the best conversation we ever had, at least to my mind, because it has kept most closely to the subject under discussion.

I have now another considerable objection to make to a statement in the essay. Dunsford represented his pleasant man as a sort of phœnix. That is the way with most writers. What they are writing about is the most important thing in the world; and, if they draw any character, it is made out to be the rarest possible. Milverton has an ideal man of business, Dunsford an ideal pleasant person; and, if you were to listen to them, you might believe that there are only one or two persons in the world whose characters would fulfil the conditions they require. How differently did I deal with my subject! My man, who was to get on in the world, was a common-place character.

DUNSFORD. Of all the inconstant men I ever met, Ellesmere is the most inconstant. He began by praising that part of my essay where I spoke of the

rarity of pleasantness. I believed in what he said; but I suppose it was meant to be ironical.

MILVERTON. It is a fault certainly to which writers are liable, this habit of exaggerating the claims of their subject. There are plenty of pleasant people, and some few good men of business. But I will tell you what is a rare character in the world,—as even Ellesmere I think will admit—a man of true moral courage. If I were asked what has astonished me most in my converse in the world, what has disappointed most the large expectations of boyhood, it has been to find that there are so few courageous people.

ELLESMERE. Yes: they are rare birds. If you were to write an essay upon courage, I would allow you to make your courageous man somewhat of a natural curiosity. Almost everybody is bent double by conformity. Very few, mentally speaking, dare to stand upright.

MR. MIDHURST. We all like to think in mobs, write in mobs, and act in mobs.

MILVERTON. I have always told you that eccentric people should be greatly encouraged, and I am glad to see that I am fortified by the weighty opinion of Mr. John Stuart Mill. The highest use, perhaps, of men of letters is that they are more eccentric, and more daring, in talk at least, than other men.

ELLESMERE. Ah, but these men of letters may combine to enslave us too. I always dread the in-

creasing influence of the press, lest it should form and fashion us into a stupid unanimity of thinking; and, for my part, I would confine the newspapers, if I could, to one leading article, one that is anonymous at least, lest we should be oppressed by leading articles.

MILVERTON. I would not do so on that account, because the multitude of leading articles gives a chance of more dissimilarity of opinion; but I would do so, if I thought it would prevent them from entering into private matters. The press is so well conducted now, there is so little scurrility, that its influence is not exceedingly feared by the general reader, and of course, until he comes to suffer himself on some occasion, he does not perceive the danger of its interfering too much with private and ordinary life.

But to return to what I was first saying, is not courage rare? I confess I cannot help having some liking for Laud and Strafford, because they were disposed to be 'thorough' in all their proceedings. Now-a-days, statesmen, divines, learned men, and especially those who delight to consider themselves practical men of the world, are seldom or ever disposed to carry out their principles to their legitimate extent. I should like a statesman to prepare his measures carefully, and then to say he would abide by them. 'You shall pass this bill, or you shall not have me as a public servant.' That is what he should say, not of course upon every occasion, but upon the

great occasions. Instead of that, at present a bill is thrown before the house as the *curée* to the hounds; and it is torn to pieces by everybody because the author of the bill will generally allow it to be so.

ELLESMERE. I am glad you admitted just now that learned men are not more courageous than the rest of mankind. They, too, seldom follow out their conclusions, and are apt to speak in innuendos and dark sayings.

However, we have now begun to wander from the subject of our essay, and so I vote that we conclude. Besides it is time for dinner. You must admit, by the way, that it is an act of considerable courage to undertake a German dinner. You will see that Mr. Midhurst, though diplomatists are generally said to be a timid race, will undertake this achievement with all the courage of a young officer about to lead a forlorn hope.

The conversation ended here, and I must admit that my essay received a much more favourable treatment than I had expected.

CHAPTER VII.

LOVERS' QUARRELS.

I MUST tell now how my lovers are going on. I was diverted from that subject by the long essay and conversation 'On the Miseries of Human Life,' which I am glad that we have got well rid of. My thoughts however, had not been far from these lovers—I mean Ellesmere and Mildred; for the other two were not worth thinking about, as there was no difficulty with them. I am not like Milverton, who, if the world go well—the distant world—is comparatively comforted even if things about him should go ill. More woman-like, I care exceedingly for those who are near and dear to me; and their troubles are apt to occupy my mind, sometimes to the exclusion of the affairs of all the rest of the world. I had, therefore, been very miserable about Ellesmere and Mildred, who seemed to have become more cold to each other than they were at the beginning of the journey.

Ellesmere's character is to my mind a very beautiful one. There is a certain greatness about him. I always say of him that if he had been born a savage, he would have been a leader amongst savages. This is a curious way of testing a man; but it is often judicious to strip a man in your fancy of all his trappings of birth, rank, and education, and to see what he would then be. Now, under any circumstances, Ellesmere would not be small. He does not quite receive justice in my account of these conversations. He never oppresses the weak. If there were a stupid man amongst us, or what the Germans call a Philister, Ellesmere would be the last person to oppress that man, intellectually speaking, or to make a butt of him. He is almost insolent sometimes, as we have seen, to men like Mr. Midhurst and Milverton. But then they can take good care of themselves; and Ellesmere's insolence has always such a vein of playfulness in it, that such men are sure to take his provocations in good part.

Then, he is very affectionate, though he does all he can to conceal this. He has not however been fortunate hitherto in loving.

Perhaps women in general do not quite understand such a man, and their sensitiveness is shocked by his brusqueness. Still I thought that a girl like Mildred Vernon might see further into the character than most women would: might begin by tolerating; go on by appreciating; and end in loving a man, who, whatever his defects, has certainly some greatness about him. I had no fear of the result if she were to love him. The haughty Mildred once broken in by love, would be very governable. The difficult horse to manage in the long run is one that has 'no mouth.' This is a strange metaphor from an elderly parson like me; but then I live much among country gentlemen and sporting farmers, whose talk sometimes goes to other subjects besides dogs and horses, but not often. I am, therefore, well up in equine metaphors.

Many times I thought of meddling in this matter, for I think I understand more about Ellesmere than I did. A great part of what, if he were a child, we should call fractiousness, that he has shown of late, arises from love. Different from most men, instead of seeking to be, or rather to seem to be, the ideal person

whom the mistress of his affections would be most inclined to admire and to love, he has evidently resolved to be loved for himself alone (if I may make the distinction between a man's self and his opinions and sentiments), and in spite of all her natural predilections. I thought I would tell Mildred this, and explain Ellesmere to her; but then I restrained myself, for you often harden a person in opposition, unless you can bring in your views and arguments exactly at the right time.

Nothing could well be more offensive to the somewhat high-flown and romantic Mildred than the low, sordid, and cynical views which Ellesmere brought forward in the essay he gave us about the arts of advancement in life. Not one offensive word, not one disagreeable thought would he have modified, I know, to please her. It was a dangerous game for a lover to play, but it was eminently characteristic of the man, and so far thoroughly sincere.

After that essay and conversation we had a walk. Ellesmere and Mildred walked together. Blanche and Milverton did the same. Mr. Midhurst preferred his own society; and I took care of Walter, for which good action (N.B.

Ellesmere is right in saying that I do not much like boys) the rest of the company ought to have been exceedingly obliged to me.

I heard some time afterwards what was the nature of the conversation between Mildred and Ellesmere, of which the following is I believe, a pretty accurate version.

ELLESMERE. And so, Miss Mildred, you are not oppressed by a suffocating sense of admiration after hearing my essay. If it had been the discourse of a popular preacher, full of all manner of unrealizable hopes, conveyed in stilted language, there would then have been the choking sensation which I am sorry to see there was not to be noticed in you while listening to my lay sermon; then, talk with Blanche at night about the delightful preacher and his beautiful language; then a pair of worked slippers, and who knows what besides? But plain John Ellesmere's truths are so unpleasant, and the man himself is so odious——

MILDRED. We need not talk about the man. The half-truths he utters are certainly very base.

ELLESMERE. I have the honour of being acquainted with one of the greatest statesmen of the present age; and he has said to me, perhaps thinking that I should be sure to sympathize with him, that the men who hope little are the men who go on

working. The great hopers, the exalted spirits as you would call them, the men for whom slippers are worked, even if they are sincere, soon become disgusted, and end by being really cynical. Depend upon it, as it is best to begin matrimony with a little aversion (Don't you think so? I alluded to that in the essay), so it is well to begin life with a little distrustfulness, or if you please to call it so, a little cynicism.

MILDRED. Is my cousin cynical?

ELLESMERE. Milverton is a very peculiar man. If you, or I, or one person in a hundred were to fall into the fits of depression, under which he occasionally labours, we should never rise to the surface of hope again. I joke about his being like the bull-dog, Fixer; but it is exactly true. Indeed he is a bull-dog in another state of development. I have known him from a boy, and I have observed that he never could pass a bull-dog without commenting upon it. He felt that he must not pass a poor relation without some notice. 'Look at that creature,' he would say, 'that calumniated animal. Most people would call it fierce and sullen: it is merely resolute, and has all the melancholy that attends any animal of great resolve.' I am not a bull-dog.

MILDRED. Certainly not a spaniel.

ELLESMERE. But still I am a base, low-bred cur?

MILDRED. Not exactly that. The dog that has seen a good deal of the worst part of the world, and supposes all the rest to be like it, whatever that dog's

name may be, is more like—not you, Sir John, but the writer of that essay.

There was a long pause in the conversation, after which Ellesmere remarked,

'That seems a somewhat affectionate couple on before us. How one knows, by the way, when people are walking before one, whether they are lovers or married people. I wonder what they are talking about. What an awkward thing it must be for a man to make an offer to a woman! I wonder whether it would be better to do it in writing. Ministers always beg deputations to leave their suggestions in writing, when they will be "duly considered by Her Majesty's government." Which way do you think would be the best, Miss Mildred?'

MILDRED. Really, Sir John, it is not a subject that has engaged my attention.

ELLESMERE. Then you have never cared so much about anybody as to think upon such a trivial matter as his making an offer to you.

MILDRED. My cousin and Blanche seem to have found a very beautiful seat up there. Shall we join them?

And so this awkward conversation ended; and Ellesmere was for the next day or two more fractious and contradictory than he had been before.

CHAPTER VIII.

ROWING DOWN THE RIVER MOSELLE.

AFTER the conversation recorded in the last chapter, Mildred and Ellesmere were more at variance than ever. He felt that he had been almost rejected; and she thought that he had been rude and somewhat impertinent, yet blamed herself for not having behaved more kindly. The whole affair might have been broken off but for the accident of our having Fixer with us, who, as the sequel will show, proved a good genius to Ellesmere.

We had finished our visit to Trèves, and had hired a boat to go down the river to Berncastle, which excursion proved one of the most pleasant and felicitous of our lives. We began joking Milverton about his affection for the two things in natural scenery which he has often told us he most delights in—a wood and a river. He

justified his predilection in the following manner.

MILVERTON. Yes; lakes are very well, but there is something to me meaningless and insipid about them. They consist of the same water, or we fancy that they do; whereas the changefulness of a river is one of its chief charms. On a lake you go from one place to another, whereas on a river you float past tower and hamlet, citadel and town; and I don't know how it is, but it seems to me more like life. Now the sea is almost too big a thing to be fond of. I suspect that people soon become tired of the sea, only they do not tell you so. It stares at you. You seem to see too much of it at once. It is connected with unpleasant associations. It has very seldom weedy marges such as we are passing, which make such good foregrounds to pictures. Altogether there is a great deal to be said against it; and it absolutely requires vessels to be upon it in order to be otherwise than a melancholy flat-faced thing. A wood is full of peace: a river of joy.

MR. MIDHURST. I have always observed that in a wood it is more difficult to believe the doctrine that the greater part of the human race will be lost eternally.

ELLESMERE. Yes: but one still feels assured that all actors, artists, authors, diplomatists will be. One must draw a line somewhere, as the barber——

DUNSFORD (anxious to change the conversation). These likings and dislikings of natural scenery are matters of temperament and of early association.

MILDRED. Sir Walter Scott says somewhere, that the sight of a mill always made him melancholy, whereas to most people I suppose it is the pleasantest and gayest thing imaginable.

MILVERTON. I am pleased to hear Dunsford make much of temperament. I have often thought that perhaps the most delicate thing a man has to manage in the course of his life is his habit of hoping: to encourage just enough hope to carry him pleasantly forwards, and yet not to indulge in rushes of hope which are perfectly sure to hurry him into the still waters of despondency. At this moment we are going down a stream of just the right force. Well, after all, management has not much to do with the regulation of this force (I am speaking of the mental force of hoping); but temperament, which is a sort of atmosphere to the solid groundwork of character, and which seems to settle more about a man's hopes and fears, and about his conduct generally, than most people would allow.

DUNSFORD. Yes: I have often thought it remarkable that men, in their comments on each other, take so little account of temperament. They say, he did this, or that, because he was a bad man; or, he was a good fellow, and forgave me soon.

ELLESMERE. Or they plunge at once into some

metaphorical statement such as,—'He is a dirty little rascal, and reviewed my book most spitefully.' Now, probably, he is not dirty and he is not little: or they say,—Dunsford at least does—'That man is a cynical vagabond; and when he was not yawning, he was smiling, at my sermon.' Now the man is not a vagabond, but a steady parishioner.

DUNSFORD. I accept your instances, Ellesmere, though they are chosen spitefully enough. In whatever way however, the abuse is put, you agree with me that they say nothing about the man's temperament.

MILVERTON. This is grand, I think——

ELLESMERE. Oh, of course; Milverton always finds out something which is very grand and very noble and very peculiar about every mean little transaction; and foolish women [here disdainful looks were interchanged between Mildred and Ellesmere] think that every deep-sounding subtlety must be true.

MILVERTON. How cross you are, Ellesmere! I was merely going to say that this neglect of temperament is grand, as it shows that all men think there is something deeper than temperament, which might indeed control temperament (though it seldom does so), which is the essential solid thing that character is inscribed upon. And there they are surely right; only the effects of temperament should by no means be ignored.

ELLESMERE. There comes the judicial summing up; and I can see that the jury, especially the feminine part of it, is inclined to go in whatever direction His Lordship nods his sapient head. Now I could account for the phenomenon in quite a different way. Men, when they speak of one another, mostly speak ill-naturedly. They hit as hard as they can, and they pronounce against a man's whole nature instead of his temperament, because talking about his temperament would seem like furnishing an excuse for the man's evil doings. That's my solution of the difficulty, but of course it's a low one.

MR. MIDHURST. Let us go back to what we were first talking of—natural scenery. How small most men are, in that they cannot like all things as they ought to be liked; and that to manifest their likings they generally disparage something else. I like a huge mountain, and the sea in a rage, when it is by no means a 'flat-faced thing;' and if I allowed myself to do so, should be inclined to pooh pooh Milverton's 'reedy marges,' and little bits of rivers. You see I am not one whit larger-hearted than the people I blame.

BLANCHE. Look what a pretty group that is of peasant women going to market! What charming colours!

MILVERTON. I am sorry to say that we English are obliged to quit our country, if we wish to see any well-dressed people in the lower classes.

ELLESMERE. The Welsh?

MILVERTON. I admit that the Welsh women look well in their peculiar dress, or at least not ill; but in general throughout England there is an indefinable air of squalidity about the great mass of the people.

MR. MIDHURST. Every other person you meet seems to be in second or third-hand clothes.

MILVERTON. I often think it would be desirable to have a good and faithful picture of a large concourse of people in England—really faithful—containing all the squalidity. What a contrast it would form to the large Venetian pictures of bygone days, where crowds are depicted in some procession of a Doge, or reception of a Saint Ursula.

MR. MIDHURST. After all, kings are the worst-dressed people in the world, considering their means and their position. There is a very curious remark of the historian Michelet's, which, indeed, I had often made myself before, only I had not applied it to Russia, as I had never been to that Court in a diplomatic capacity. But I had frequently thought of it when at other Courts. Michelet had mentioned that the Russian peasant learnt in his catechism, that the Emperor is an 'emanation from the Deity;' and great, he adds, is the peasant's surprise when he sees this wonderful personage, this 'emanation' on whom bishops depend, in the tight uniform of a Russian officer. I recollect Michelet's words: '*Grande est la surprise de ce paysan, s'il va à Saint-Peters-*

bourg, ou à Moscou, et qu'il y voie l'empereur. Quoi! c'est-là une émanation! Quoi! ce personnage religieux dont dépendent les évêques est un officier avec l'uniforme serré et la tenue raide de tout autre militaire russe?" *

ELLESMERE. We cannot hope to change the costume of kings; and, moreover, as long as they are devoted to soldiering, let them wear the dress of soldiers, however unregal it may be. But I want to discuss the dress of common people.

If ever there was a thing which required to be chiefly kept in a bandbox, and to be worn by delicate people who never went into a crowd, had no girls or boys to manage at home, and lived in a Peruvian climate where it rains only twice a year, that thing is a modern bonnet. Can there be any creature who looks so utterly deplorable as a draggle-tailed old woman in a bulgy bonnet which has once been fine, which belonged to a lady in the square adjacent to the alley where the old woman displays this cast-off, withered trumpery? A seedy old man in the hat and dress-coat that once were mine is not a gay and pleasant object, but he is far outdone by the old woman. However, as to restoring a national costume, you might as well, to use Canning's phrase, attempt to restore the Heptarchy. I

* *Légendes démocratiques du Nord.* Par J. MICHELET. 1854. p. 266.

console myself by thinking that our ugly dress is a consequence of our freedom.

MILVERTON. Then it is but another instance that everything is paid for, nothing given, in this world of compromise. It does not, however, appear to me impossible for people to be free, and yet to be well dressed. Moreover, national costumes, I should think, are cheap things.

ELLESMERE. I suppose it would be considered impertinent if I were to take this opportunity of saying something about the dress of the higher female classes. How immeasurably absurd it is! And, depend upon it, if we knew all that milliners could tell us, we should find how irrational are the demands which their customers make upon them to produce all this ugliness, and how cruel to the poor people are these demands.

But, as my friend Sauerteig says (what a clever thing that is of Carlyle having a Sauerteig or Teufelsdröckh to father unpleasant sayings upon), 'Women are great brutes to one another.'

MILDRED. This is polite language, certainly,—quite chivalrous.

ELLESMERE. You know very well that even the best of you would hurry on the making of some birthday dress, regardless of whether or not this Juggernaut of a dress crushed out the life of nine of the poor wretches employed to make it. Do you suppose we hurry on our tailors in that way?

MILDRED. What is there to hurry? Nobody knows whether your frightfulness of costume is new or old.

ELLESMERE. Well, it would be a grand thing if some one woman, on some one occasion, would give up making a grand appearance rather than augment the sum of human suffering by cruel hurry, she being probably to blame for not having made up her mind and given her order about her trumpery in time. But I should like a parliamentary return to be made whether there is one such woman—I mean a woman who had once said to her milliner:—'Don't distress your people, though I should like to have my dress in time.' This would not be going very far. She would be but a fraction of the one which I should be looking out for to be named in my parliamentary return; but you would never amongst you all make up the noble integer.

There is one ironical comfort which I have in this matter of dress—that, as men understand the ins and outs of it so little, they often admire most the dress of those women who dress most poorly; and a woman gets up all this cloud of rubbish about her, merely to become less attractive—which I suppose is not her chief aim.

MILVERTON. You are a great deal too hard upon women, Ellesmere; but indeed you are not in one of your sweetest moods to-day. I must own, however, that I suspect you are not far wrong in inti-

mating that there is sometimes a good deal of cruel hurry applied to milliners.

MILDRED. Sir John Ellesmere seldom contents himself with intimating. I should rather say insulting than intimating.

MR. MIDHURST. Pooh, pooh! Don't be tempestuous, girl. Don't you know that the men who are always attacking women are those who feel most subjugated by them? Sir John is really enslaved by furbelows and flounces, and he struggles to disown the captivation.

DUNSFORD. The similarity of dress in all classes is significant of the equality, in the eye of the law, of all classes.

MILVERTON. I wish this similarity of dress were significant of more equality; for, to my mind, the great difficulty in the way of all kinds of improvement consists in the immense inequality of different classes. Now I am not going to propound any socialistic theories. A certain amount of inequality gives animation to the whole body politic; but still there is an amount of inequality, not exactly of riches, but of thought and culture, that is a hindrance to you whichever way you turn, and which, as it seems to me, statesmen and reformers should endeavour to reduce as much as possible.

ELLESMERE. Give instances of what you mean. Nothing, my philosophic friend, is clearly understood, while people are talking of abstractions.

MILVERTON. Without pretending that every person in this company is good, and I know one who decidedly is not good, yet we have all attained that degree of moral culture which would prevent our stealing.

ELLESMERE. I am not sure of that. You often steal my ideas, dress them up in the Milvertonian fashion, and then they are pronounced by this good company to be very worthy ideas, though that is the last epithet that would be applied to them if they were uttered in my fashion, and by me.

MILVERTON. I am content. You may put it that we have arrived at that degree of culture that we shall only steal Ellesmere's ideas. What an inconceivable advantage it would be for the world, if the great mass of it never went further in the way of robbery than such an innocent appropriation as that. But this you will say is Utopian. Let us take another case. Suppose that the whole of the world were as free from superstition as the average of persons in the enlightened classes are now.

ELLESMERE. Humph! That would not be any great amount of freedom.

MILVERTON. Could there be such a thing as a belief in witchcraft, or credence given to Joe Smith? Again, suppose there were the simplest knowledge with respect to air and water, universal amongst mankind: how easy then, comparatively speaking, would be the work of sanitary reform! but now the

difficulties of addressing the world upon any such subject are great, because what is certain and elementary to one class, is far advanced, hard to understand, and seemingly problematical, when addressed to another.

Again, take a physical instance—the difference in different classes as regards cleanliness is so great as to prove a most effective social hindrance. Again, the modes of living are so widely, so profoundly dissimilar, that the upper classes will always make frantic efforts to avoid for themselves and their children the dire squalidity that they perceive amongst the lowest classes. Hence a wild love of riches, which is the child of fear, and quite to be distinguished from the mere desire of hoarding. Of course great differences in all the above respects must exist; but I merely wish to point out that the greatest ends are promoted by diminishing these extreme points of difference. And note this, that the difference of culture is so great even in the same class, that a man cannot address arguments to one set in that class without absolutely shocking another set, or being so far above them as to be unintelligible.

I have turned this thought over in my mind in many ways for many years, and now that I bring it out to you I dare say that I do not do so well, and that it has rather a hazy appearance, but ponder it yourselves, and I am sure you will make something of it.

ELLESMERE. Notwithstanding the wonderful charm that there is, according to Milverton, in going down a river, and notwithstanding the immense delight which there should be to any rational mind, in our conversation, which I am sure is as varied as the river's banks, Miss Blanche, I see, has judiciously provided herself with a novel to fill up the dull pauses of the day. It is, I see, one of Tauchnitz's editions. This man is not so great a robber as the rest. He gives you poor devils something, does he not, Dunsford?

DUNSFORD. I believe he does; but my works are not exactly those which are liable to be pirated.

ELLESMERE. I do not know about that. I will bet that your treatise on the Greek article is fully as amusing as Miss Blanche's novel, and quite as veracious.

MILVERTON. Now that authors have lost splendid patrons, and that it is generally concluded by the world that they can do nothing but write, the question of international copyright becomes a question of life and death for them. I know at this moment an author engaged in an elaborate work that will take the best part of his life to finish it. He is occasionally obliged to leave off, and devote himself to lighter works, because the only book that he can write which is worth anything does not pay its expenses. His greater work is reprinted, as it comes out, in America, and if he received any of the pro-

ceeds of the American edition, he would be able to go on gallantly.

ELLESMERE. Pray do not let us enter upon the calamities of authors, or the night will darken around us before we have made a beginning of the subject. Besides, who asked them to be authors? Is there a glut of sawyers and tinkers in the land.

DUNSFORD. That last is quite a brutal remark, Ellesmere.

ELLESMERE. It may be so; but there is some truth in it. Let us go back, however, to Miss Blanche's novel. I wonder that her severe uncle, and her rigid cousin and preceptor have not frightened her out of all novel reading.

MILVERTON. Now when did you ever hear me talk in any unjust way against novels?

DUNSFORD. Or me?

ELLESMERE. Could either of you stand a good examination in your Dickens?

MILVERTON. I could.

ELLESMERE. Tell us then which of all the characters in his novels you like best—of his minor ones I mean, because your answer to that will show whether you really have read any work of his.

MILVERTON. Dick Swiveller. Of all Dickens's minor characters that is my favourite. The character is so pleasantly marked out, without any needless repetition, or labels put on the back of the character to show who is on the scene. A more exquisite bit

of humour I do not know in any modern work, than Dick Swiveller's proceedings when he goes down into the kitchen to take a hand of cribbage with the Marchioness.

You would find that I could stand a good examination in modern novels.

ELLESMERE. Dunsford is silent. He does not even pretend to know anything about novels. But all you pedants secretly dislike fiction: it takes the wind out of your sails.

MILVERTON. I am sure I do not take a pedantic view of fiction. Nothing of course can be more delightful in its way than taking up a pleasant novel and so dispelling our own troubles and transferring ourselves into other people's hopes, joys, and sorrows. But still I must own we are all a little too much inclined to give ourselves up to fiction, and I think sometimes that the hours which we devote to the reading of works of fiction might be more advantageously spent in other pursuits. By using the word 'advantageously' I have no especial reference to utility, but should be inclined to maintain that more pleasure of a sure, sustained, and prolonged kind, is to be gained by the study of anything that is based upon reality than is to be got out of any works of fiction.

Now an odd instance, an almost childish instance, occurs to me, to illustrate what I mean. You know my boy Walter's passion for birds' eggs,—not that

he is a birds'-nesting boy, but that he wishes to possess a specimen of every kind of bird's egg that exists. I have been quite amused to see how far this small pursuit has led the boy, and what large fields of pleasure and of interest it has brought him into.

ELLESMERE. Yes: the boy is a capital companion in the country; he knows so much about so many little things that one does not know.

MILVERTON. It follows naturally from this one pursuit. Here is a certain herb or weed. He points it out to you. He tells you that there is a certain insect that will be found here, and a bird that preys upon that insect. He extends his birds'-egg researches into other countries, picks up a little geography, a little civil history, and a great deal of natural history. He was quite ardent the other day in his longings to see a South American forest, into the ornithological wonders of which he had gained an insight by studying sundry books of travel.

In his little way, too, he has gained a knowledge of all the difficulties attendant upon classification. Shall he (Walter) arrange his treasures and catalogue them according to size, or according to country, or according to genera? He varies his classification frequently, and will probably end in some mixed scheme, as we generally do in such matters.

Then there is something new to be found out wherever he goes. You must have observed how, on the first morning after our arrival at each town,

he has been off to hunt for Zoological museums; and, with the perseverance of a collector, has generally contrived to get into the museum whether it was properly open or not. Why has he quitted the boat now but to hunt out something or other which is far more interesting to him than our conversation would be?

I could not have chosen a humbler instance, but you see how far this one pursuit, based upon fact, has led the boy, and how much further it may lead him. It has been worth to him innumerable *Tales of the Genii*.

ELLESMERE. The tale of the Roc's egg must have had an especial interest for Walter.

MR. MIDHURST. The simpleton hero of one novel has no connexion with the simpleton hero of another. I am merely alluding to an idea which Milverton started some time ago, when he was talking about history.

Again, fiction is brought to you: knowledge connected with facts you have to pursue.

MILVERTON. Men, of course, are the interesting creatures to mankind, and therefore I was, perhaps, taking an unfavourable case for my argument in comparing any branch of natural history with even the fictions that have reference to mankind.

But let a man once become interested in any great class of human events, and consider what a field of delight it opens for him. He is interested by the

disputes of religious sects: he wishes to know what is a High Churchman, what is a Low Churchman, and what a Puritan, or a Presbyterian. He turns to the Reformation; and, while studying that, cannot help looking at some of the most important struggles which have taken place in our own country. He must get some view of Henry the Eighth's times, of Elizabeth's, of James the First's, of Charles the First's, of Charles the Second's. Then, if he is a curious inquirer, back he goes to the early periods of Church history, becomes conversant with saints and martyrs, popes and emperors, Guelphs and Ghibellines. In short, innumerable books and men, periods of history and distant countries become subjects of great interest to him; and there are life and growth in his mind. He reads his novel, too, with greater pleasure when he can read it at all; and fiction presents itself to a mind which has some knowledge of reality to compare the fiction with.

I have not been speaking of a student, of a man who has time for great research, but of a man immersed in busy life, who has yet a few vacant hours to employ in some pursuit foreign from his business.

ELLESMERE. Do not let us talk any more about history: it is sure to lead to a lecture from Milverton. Let us make him talk about something else, which would especially suit the present hour. I suppose, Milverton, that you are well up in the literature of

Rivers, that you know all that has been said by poets or prose writers upon them.

MILVERTON. No, I do not. I can only remember two or three good things that have been said about them.

ELLESMERE. Well, give us anything that you remember, for I do not find the travelling on a river so lively as not to require something else to amuse one.

MILVERTON. The first thing that I remember is from Lavater. I have often quoted it to you. He compares public opinion to a river. These are his words. 'Nothing is more impartial than the stream-like public: always the same and never the same; of whom, sooner or later, each misrepresented character obtains justice, and each calumniated honour: he who cannot wait for that is either ignorant of human nature or feels that he was not made for honour.'*

BLANCHE. Let us have some poetry about rivers.

MILVERTON. I remember Denham's celebrated lines upon the Thames.

'Thames! the most loved of all the Ocean's sons,
By his old sire, to his embraces runs,
Hasting to pay his tribute to the sea,
Like mortal life to meet eternity;
Though with those streams he no resemblance hold,
Whose foam is amber, and their gravel gold:
His genuine and less guilty wealth t' explore,
Search not his bottom, but survey his shore,
O'er which he kindly spreads his spacious wing,
And hatches plenty for th' ensuing spring;'——

* *Aphorisms on Man.* No. 450.

ELLESMERE. 'Hatches plenty,' do you say? hatches poison! I wish Denham had had a case this summer before a railway committee of the House of Commons. He would have turned his verses very differently, if he had lived to turn them at all. But proceed.

MILVERTON. I forget the next few lines; but afterwards it goes on so.

> 'No unexpected inundations spoil
> The mower's hopes, nor mock the ploughman's toil;
> But godlike his unweary'd bounty flows;
> First loves to do, then loves the good he does.
> Nor are his blessings to his banks confin'd,
> But free and common as the sea or wind;
> When he, to boast or to disperse his stores,
> Full of the tributes of his grateful shores,
> Visits the world, and in his flying tow'rs
> Brings home to us, and makes both Indies ours;
> Finds wealth where 'tis, bestows it where it wants,
> Cities in deserts, woods in cities, plants.
> So that to us no thing, no place, is strange,
> While his fair bosom is the world's exchange.
> O could I flow like thee! and make thy stream
> My great example, as it is my theme;
> Though deep yet clear, though gentle yet not dull;
> Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.'

The lines sound somewhat ironical, do they not, upon the present state of things? Other rivers, however, in England are just as much polluted as the Thames, and it will be hard work for the coming century to recover the purity of our rivers; but it must be done.

MR. MIDHURST. It will not cost more than a little

war or two; and we must abridge ourselves in those luxuries if we can possibly manage to do so.

ELLESMERE. Much will depend upon you diplomatists. But, Milverton, have you no more scraps to give us.

MILVERTON. I can give you a bit from Tennyson, about a lazy river.

> 'Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
> Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
> News from the humming city comes to it
> In sound of funeral or of marriage bells,
> And sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
> The windy clanging of the minster clock;
> Although between it and the garden lies
> A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,
> That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
> Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
> Barge laden, to three arches of a bridge
> Crown'd with the minster-towers.'

ELLESMERE. Now I am going to ask you a question which will be a puzzler, I think. When Dunsford was teaching us anything in mathematics, he used always to push his proposition to some extreme —just like him, always in extremes—and poor wretched X was made into infinity, or nothing, by which means he proved wonderful things. Now I say, if Milverton loves rivers, he ought to love canals.

MILVERTON. So I do. I was charmed with Holland. I think nothing more beautiful than seeing tall masts amidst the landscape, and brown sails

amongst the trees. Then the movement on a canal is more like life than even the movement on a river. You go along with difficulty, in an artificial way that has been cut for you, and you meet with all manner of locks and hindrances, and have tolls and taxes to pay, and do not see too much of the country you pass through (for in life men do not get many bird's-eye views of the country they are traversing) and you are often enveloped in mist, and after a good deal of labour you find yourself upon the broad ocean; for the canals lead there too as well as the rivers. I begin to think that poets have neglected canals.

MILDRED. One poet has not.

> 'I never knew myself to sleep o' horseback,
> And yet I must have slept. The evening's heat
> Had much oppressed me; then the tedious tract
> Of naked moorland, and the long flat road
> And slow straight stream, for ever side by side,
> Like poverty and crime—I'm sure I slept.'

The slow straight stream must have been a canal.

DUNSFORD. I suppose that Ellesmere would not bear a Latin quotation, but there are beautiful descriptions of rivers in Quintus Curtius, and one of the Cydnus, I think I could quote.

ELLESMERE. It must be but one then. I certainly do dislike Latin quotations, for being an educated man, or rather having been an educated man, one is obliged to look as if one understood all the Latin that is quoted, and sometimes one does not—which is awkward.

The fact is, my Latin, having been put away for some years, is a little moth-eaten. But, as I said before, we will endure one Latin quotation, spoken slowly; and you may explain any hard word—to the girls.

DUNSFORD. *Cydnus, non spatio aquarum, sed liquore memorabilis: quippe leni tractu e fontibus labens puro solo excipitur: nec torrentes incurrunt, qui placidè manantis alveum turbant. Itaque incorruptus idemque frigidissimus, quippe multa riparum amœnitate inumbratus, ubique fontibus suis similis in mare evadit.*

ELLESMERE. I think I can make out most of that: it is tolerably easy Latin. The poets always talk of the gliding of rivers. Now it is this gliding I dislike. Very well for them, but decidedly slow for us when we are upon them. I like the Great Western express train, especially for the last fifty-six miles, from Didcot to London, done in an hour. [How characteristic this speech was of the impatient Ellesmere. He cannot sit quietly in a boat, like any other reasonable being.]

MILVERTON. For me a light carriage and two post horses is sufficient.

ELLESMERE. Nobody has written the poetry of posting.

MILVERTON. Nothing used to be more delightful than a long day's posting in the olden time. You could see enough of the country: you could stop to

look at anything beautiful (not that one ever did stop); there was a pleasant life and bustle in the constant change of horses and postboys: and altogether it was a most inspiriting transaction. I sympathize with a great traveller in Russia who confessed that the length of the journeys was the main delight to him.

But in those golden days there was no electric telegraph. Once off, you were well of; and nuisances of all kinds were soon left long behind. Now, to be secure, a man must go away in a yacht; and the very name of a yacht is odious to poor creatures like me who suffer from sea-sickness.

MR. MIDHURST. Milverton, I see, would have agreed with Dr. Johnson that there was nothing so delightful as travelling in a post-chaise, with a pretty woman by one's side.

MILVERTON. I decline the pretty woman. The chief merit of a carriage is that you can be alone, and not have to talk.

ELLESMERE. She might be deaf, or have a singular talent for silence.

MILVERTON. After one has left college, where happily we could 'sport' our doors without offence, there is no place for uninterrupted thought like a carriage. There need be no greetings: there is never dulness; and altogether I believe there have been more successful trains of thought elaborated during this species of locomotion than under any other circumstances.

Apropos of carriages, I remember an amusing story of an Italian ecclesiastic. He was in company with some other good people; they were inveighing against the pomps and riches of this world, and showing the inability of such things to make men happy. He quite chimed in with his companions. 'All, all is vanity,' he said; and then he paused for a moment—'except a carriage.' Now, he was a very good man, devoted to charitable works in the great town where he lived; but probably he was a studious sickly man, and had found the immense gain that it was for him in his work to ride sometimes in a carriage. So, when he was denouncing the pomps and vanities of the world, an honest sudden thought compelled him to make this exception. But it has a very droll sound, 'all, all is vanity—except a carriage.'

I quite agree with him; so when I put down my brougham—that little box upon wheels in which I have done a good deal of work of one kind or another—you will know that it is sheer, undoubted, unmitigated poverty. You will not be taken in by my saying that a carriage is a nuisance; that a horse is always falling ill or getting into some trouble; that, for my part, I prefer keeping my carriage in my breeches pocket, as I have heard a man say, slapping his breeches pocket significantly. You will know that all these are the excuses one makes for the wickedness of being poor, and which one fondly fancies one's neighbours do not see through. Upon my

word, now I come to think of it, the last drive one should take in a carriage which one had had for many years, would be a very pathetic affair; and one would look at the dear four-wheeled thing, when one got out of it, as a snail must at its shell which it has quitted for ever.'

It was just at this point of the conversation that we pulled in nearer to the land, as Walter had made signs that he wished now to get into the boat. It was a weedy rushy part of the river that we entered. Fixer saw a rat or some other creature, which he was wild to get at. Ellesmere excited him to do so, and the dog sprang out of the boat. In a minute or two Fixer became entangled in the weeds, and seemed to be in danger of sinking. Ellesmere, without thinking what he was about, made a hasty effort to save the dog, seized hold of him, but lost his own balance and fell out of the boat. In another moment Mildred gave me the end of her shawl to hold, which she had wound round herself, and sprang out too. The sensible diplomatist lost no time in throwing his weighty person to the other side of the boat. The two boatmen did the

same. But for this move, the boat would, in all probability, have capsized, and we should all have been lost. Mildred was successful in clutching hold of Ellesmere; and Milverton and I managed to haul them close to the boat and to pull them in. Ellesmere had not relinquished hold of Fixer. All this happened, as such accidents do, in almost less time than it takes to describe them. And now came another dripping creature splashing into the boat; for Master Walter, who can swim like a duck, had plunged in directly he saw the accident, but too late to be of any assistance.

I believe if all my readers were to guess for ten years, not one of them would succeed in guessing what was the first remark which Ellesmere made when the four dripping creatures had seated themselves a little apart from us, and we were looking at them with the feeling of terror that comes most strongly upon you just after a danger is past. I think, though, if I mistake not, there was a whisper from Ellesmere to Mildred before he spoke aloud. 'You know, Walter,' he said, 'that I returned your knife yesterday evening: it was when

your father asked for it to cut his pencil.' We all looked at Ellesmere as if he must be bewildered by what he had gone through, hearing him make such an unaccountable remark. But he continued, 'you need not therefore have been in such a hurry to save me, Walter.' Then turning to us, 'don't you know the story of the American boy (and all boys are alike), how, when he heard his father was drowned, he said, somewhat crossly, as an injured boy, 'and he had my knife, too, in his pocket.' Walter, I suppose, had quite forgotten that I had given him back his knife.'

Mr. Midhurst then remarked that he did not wish to make more of his own merits than they deserved; but he believed that his weight had been the means of our being saved. 'Ah,' replied Ellesmere, 'I see the final cause of all those good dinners of which Mr. Midhurst has partaken, upon principle, in all quarters of the globe. If it had not been for the solidity thus obtained, there would have been no more Friends in Council, for you know you would all be as dull as ditch-water without me. By the way what a silly thing it is that a man who knows something touch-

ing contingent remainders, and who could pick a hole, and that not a small one, in any given marriage settlement, should know no more how to swim, than a bale of goods. But that is just the way with us men: we omit to learn what is most useful.'

We covered them up with all the cloaks and railway blankets we could muster, and with our own coats, and then made for the nearest town on the banks of the river. I hope it was not indelicate in me to notice, but I saw from a meaning smile on Milverton's face that he noticed too, that Ellesmere took advantage of all these wrappages to sidle up very close to Mildred, to take her hand, which was not withdrawn, and to keep it in his all the time we were in the boat.

And so the quarrel of the lovers ended. A comical thing, life! Here were two people, who really had a great affection for one another, and they might have separated, and this affection only have become a life-long heartache, if an indiscreet dog had not plunged into the water after a rat or something that looked like one. I should have laughed now at this incident had it come in the third

volume of a novel, evidently to bring about a desired marriage. But, I believe, in novels it is generally the gentleman who saves the lady; and that interesting adventure mostly occurs at the end of the first volume. However, the result was so good in this case that I ought to do anything but comment jestingly upon the means which brought that result about. A great weight was taken off my mind when I found that the quarrel was not merely made up for that day, but that there were explanations and apologies and long talks, ending as such things generally do in such cases. In fine, Sir John Ellesmere was from that day the accepted lover of Mildred Vernon—which fact he announced officially to us in a way peculiar to himself. Two days after the accident had occurred, he suddenly asked us whether we had ever heard of the malediction which the Duke of Buckingham (Charles the Second's Buckingham) had uttered on the dog that bit him? 'No.' 'This is what the Duke said:—'I wish you were married and went to live in the country.' Think of a dog, the most unconjugal of creatures, marrying

and going to live in the country! But I am going to be married, too, though we are not going to live in the country, are we Mildred? We are not quite so simple as that.' Mildred blushed, but said nothing; and we all joyfully offered our congratulations.

CHAPTER IX.

ON GOVERNMENT.

WE were at Metz, on our way home. It is a pleasant town, with fine public gardens, and a very ancient cathedral well worth studying.

It happened that there was a great review, or inspection of troops, while we were there ; and wherever we went about the town, nothing was to be seen but mounted officers and orderlies dashing about, and nothing to be heard but the clang of military music. Milverton became very peevish. Had Ellesmere been in such a mood, he would have indulged in many outbreaks of temper ; but Milverton's annoyance was only to be discerned by a few cross and melancholy utterances, and by the way in which he avoided, whenever he could, meeting any of the troops which were marching out to the place of concourse.

I knew well what was in his mind. He

was mourning over this eternal soldiering, and I studied to give him an opportunity of talking about it. This was rather difficult, as we had already had a long essay and conversation upon war. At length I bethought me of bringing up the cognate subject of government, and invited him to have a discussion upon it. Ellesmere, probably discerning what was my drift, backed my request. Mr. Midhurst is always ready to discuss any subject. We strolled to the extreme end of the public gardens, to that spot where you look over a little river, and where there are fortifications on each side of it. This naturally called forth a splenetic remark from Milverton, in the mood he then was. 'Look,' he said, 'at these tons of solid brickwork, what a sacrifice it is of human labour! I know what you are going to say, that Metz is a frontier fortress, and must be well defended. I admit all that; but cannot help deploring these so-called necessities. Mr. Disraeli speaks of 'democratic finance,' and there is something in what he means to imply by those words. But think of imperial finance! Is there no condemnation to be pronounced upon that too?' Here

Mr. Midhurst interrupted him, and the conversation thus proceeded:—

MR. MIDHURST. I thought we were to have a discussion upon government, of which these armies are but the mere tools. We all wish, Milverton, to have an extempore essay, or if you please, a speech, from you on the subject.

MILVERTON. We have discussed this subject of government once before. I have not, however, any recollection, or scarcely any, of what I then said; and if I repeat myself, you must not blame me for it. The discussion was not of my seeking.

ELLESMERE. I really think there is nothing more interesting than taking up a topic which we have discussed before, and so discovering what change has gone on in our minds. It is for a similar reason that, when I travel, I like visiting the same towns over and over again. Do not be afraid, Milverton, of being inconsistent. It is the especial privilege of all politicians; so talk boldly, and without the fear of Hansard before your eyes. Government is the subject which I know you prefer to all others for discussion.

MILVERTON. I am reassured by what you say, and will make an attempt at once. But do talk seriously, if you can, Ellesmere, about it, as I confess I am a little irritable this morning; and I hate to see great subjects of this kind treated flippantly,

as they often are in the gravest assemblages. Let us show a different spirit.

ELLESMERE. I will be upon my best behaviour. I will not make more than one joke during the whole conversation, and that shall be a solid joke, merely disguising some wise thought which might be acceptable to this serene company, but which I cannot express in any other way. Now, begin.

MILVERTON.—

WELL the first thing I have to say is that I believe a great deal can be done by good government. This seems a truism; but it requires to be stated and re-stated, for I declare there are many intelligent people who seem to believe that nothing more remains to be done by government than just to leave everything alone.

As an illustration of the contrary, I will take an instance which is familiar to all of you, which I have often used before, but which is so apt to the point, that I have no hesitation in repeating it. Consider the formation of railways in our country. It was greatly left alone, as far as government

was concerned; and the mischief that has arisen on that account is almost irreparable. Had Lord Dalhousie's counsels prevailed, the wealth, the well-being, and the convenience of our countrymen would have profited thereby to an immense extent. The foregoing is comparatively a defunct subject; but the state of public affairs teems with matters of the deepest public interest, and of great complexity. The world has not become easier to manage than it used to be; and there are many subjects at the present moment rising into importance which would require all the sagacity that England can produce to settle them in a statesman-like manner. Even in minor affairs the quantity of intelligence which is required to be at the command of government is more than anybody would believe who had not carefully looked into the subject. There are many acts of parliament which are nearly unworkable, and which require a thorough supervision in detail.

Then consider how the work of parliament is falling behindhand. Every year there are more and more continuation bills, which is merely a fine name for work postponed or

shuffled over. I believe that some of the most foreseeing statesmen of our time regard these continuation bills with thorough vexation and dismay.

Then there is finance. I do not know how other people regard this matter; but my mind is filled with the most painful apprehensions arising from the way in which we are going on about finance. I suppose you know that since the year eighteen hundred and thirty-three, our estimates are immensely increased, in some cases doubled. What is to be the end of all this? I know what would have been the end already, if we had not been blessed, of late years, with good harvests and an extraordinary supply of gold.

Financiers had been looking forward to the time when the Long Annuities should fall in, as a halcyon time for them. All that relief has been anticipated. And the worst is, that there is every prospect of a continued increase in our estimates for the purposes of war. I know that Mr. Midhurst will say that this is inevitable, that it has nothing to do with us, and that all Europe must be better governed before we can safely retrench in these respects.

I do not quite admit this, though no doubt there is great force in such remarks. One cannot, however, but deplore the sad misapprobation of mankind for conquerors and for ambitious, self-seeking, one-ideaed persons in high power; and it does seem to me that a good understanding might be established by some great statesman in England between himself and the leading financiers of Europe that should very much cripple the resources of monarchs, when those resources were likely to be applied to the direct purposes of war, or to those menacings of war which are implied in the maintenance of large standing armies. This ground, however, has been gone over before. But admitting that these estimates are not to be diminished, I still maintain that there is large room for financial skill, and that much may be done by it to make the public burdens fall less heavily upon us than they do.

The first and ever-recurring difficulty is to get able men into office, and to give them something like sufficient power. There should be men in office who love the State as priests love the Church. As it is, their own indivi-

dualities have become more and more the absorbing subject of interest with most European men. There is this terrible striving to get rich, this anxiety to grasp or maintain a good position; but a hearty, self-denying, almost fanatical love of the Commonwealth is confined to few breasts. The prudent selfishness of the day, which I observe delights to make out that Shakespeare feathered his nest well, can hardly conceive the indifference of that great man, Pitt, concerning his private affairs. Of course I do not mean to praise indebtedness in him or in any other man; but I should like to see some of his greatness of spirit. I believe Pitt would have gone readily to jail, thus atoning as he best could for the confusion of his private affairs, if he could but have left public affairs in the prosperity which he longed to win for them.

Now, as regards the House of Commons, I will not say that it is usurping, but, at any rate, it is absorbing the whole functions of government. How is it doing that work which it arrogates for itself? Will any one contend that it is accomplishing that work in a satisfactory manner? The universal answer

will be, 'No.' This being the state of things, there remain but three courses. Sir Robert Peel's 'three courses' come in upon every occasion.

First, you may leave things alone. Amongst a quiet, douce, readily-suffering, largely-enduring people like the British, much may be left alone. Moreover, when a State has attained a certain amount of force and prosperity such as Great Britain has attained, it takes a long time to break it down. You may heap muddlement upon muddlement; and, with a free people, though much mischief is done and much good prevented, still they work on steadily, each man in his private capacity doing something to retrieve the effects of bad or of indolent government. No lover of his country, however, would wish for such a state of things to continue indefinitely.

Secondly, the executive government might be greatly strengthened. I have often pointed out to this company, until I am afraid they are tired of hearing it, various ways in which the public offices might be strengthened. In particular, I have shewn them how this might be done by the addition of [redacted]ncillors to the

various departments—not of a council, which I suspect will never be found to work well, but of individual men of high promise or well-recognised ability, whose business it should be to make themselves well acquainted with the affairs of the department to which they are attached, and to be at the minister's call for any special service connected with his duties. I am not, however, bound to this plan. I merely say that, if public business is for the future to be better conducted than it is now, the public offices must be intellectually strengthened.

Thirdly, we come to the consideration of the House of Commons. In all the Reform Bills that have yet been shadowed forth, you must admit that there is no sign of any provision being made for the introduction of statesmen. Of course the small boroughs are much talked of as affording this facility. All one can reply to that argument is, that the great land-owners and other personages who have the domination in these boroughs, have not of late years shown any desire to bring forward new men of much public utility. Mark, I admit that the kind of man wanted is very rare. There are a

number of clever young men who can write good leading articles, and talk well about politics; but there are very few of the type of the late Francis Horner, who are students of public affairs. To acquire the knowledge requisite for the management of any private estate is no light toil. To become acquainted with such an estate as that of Great Britain is a matter of undying labour. There are not many who will undertake it, and they certainly have no reason to expect any remarkable encouragement.

Not much then is apparently to be hoped for from the small boroughs. If they ever fulfilled the function of sending into parliament singularly capable men, it is a function which has fallen into desuetude with them.

Various ways have been proposed by thoughtful men, of whom I believe Professor Craik was the first, to find out some method of gaining for minorities a true representation. This difficulty has been conquered, both by Professor Craik, and also by Mr. Hare, who has gone further, and has proposed a most remarkable scheme of representation, deserving large consideration. A single sentence will

explain the principle. He proposes not to confine representation to locality, allowing constituents to give their votes to candidates who may not reside in the locality whence the voter derives his right of voting. Amidst the turmoil of politics, these thoughtful propositions are not likely to gain much attention. But if anything could be devised, whether by means of what are rather unfairly called 'fancy franchises,' or by a certain number of seats being placed at the disposal of government, or by Mr. Hare's more comprehensive plan—whereby men of a peculiar aptitude for public business could be introduced into the House of Commons, it would be a great benefit to the community. Property will take care of itself. Stupidity will always be fairly represented. Prejudice is never silent in any public assembly. Mere numbers always have their weight. But ability is a shy thing, and if we could in any way foster it, we should surely do so. It will only be when some large reform is adopted, involving considerable popular concessions, that some adjunct may be made, without much cavil, which should give an opening for peculiar

ability to find its way into the House of Commons.

I pass now to another branch of the subject; and to my mind it is by far the most important one that I shall have to propose for your consideration. In any discussions upon reform, in any propositions for improving the representative or the executive bodies, how rarely is a thought bestowed upon the colonies! How rarely it is recollected that we are a great Empire! I am persuaded that if we are to maintain this empire, it must be by attaching to us, in some manifest way, the eminent and forcible men of the Colonies. I do not care how this is done. At any rate, I do not venture to assert dogmatically how it should be done. Whether by attaching them as councillors to a department; whether by introducing them into the Privy Council; whether by giving them some opportunities of getting into the House of Commons; whether by conferring peerages upon them,—it is not for a private person like me to determine. But if we wish to remain a great State, we must be prepared, I think, to give those persons, who in distant regions are increasing and enriching our

empire, some means of adit to the imperial Executive and the imperial Legislature.

Consider the Roman Empire. See what a great thing it was to be a Roman Citizen. It does not require any peculiar learning to apprehend what was the depth and meaning of that citizenship. The uncultivated reader of the Bible can judge from what he reads of St. Paul in the Acts, as well nearly as many a scholar can, of the pervading weight and power of Roman citizenship. 'When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.'

Race is beginning everywhere to be more thought of. It may be wise, or it may not be wise; but such is the fact. And it seems to me, that it would be one of the greatest efforts of statesmanship to keep that large portion of the Anglo-Saxon race which still remains under the sway of our Sovereign, united to us in the closest bonds.

I was honoured some time ago by a visit from an American, who is admitted to be one of the most eminent persons in the United States. He is a man above all petty preju-

dices, above any small-hearted jealousy of the parent country. He looked around him, and said that he could perceive no signs of decadence in England. He praised our vigour: he lauded our courage: he had a good word to say for our agriculture, and openly acknowledged that he was astonished at the burly forms and downright independence of bearing, which he saw, for instance, among our farmers. 'But,' said he, smiling benignantly, 'we shall outgrow you; we must outgrow you.' Now, I am not so sure of that. At any rate I believe we can put off this outgrowing for a long time, if we only have the skill and the justness to attach our colonies to us by firm and durable bonds of thorough amity.

Look at Australia. Look at Canada, at South Africa, at the rapidly-rising British Columbia: what fellow-citizens we have in these most flourishing regions.

You may tell me that the colonies have legislatures of their own; but that does not appear to me a sufficient reason for not endeavouring to bring the eminent men of those colonies in closer connexion with the imperial legislature.

As regards India, the course of legislation of late has been to thrust men, who are well acquainted with India, out of the House of Commons. I say, on the contrary, let us have as many of them as we can get there. We have undertaken to govern India: let us gain all the benefit we can from the experience and sagacity of any persons conversant with that vast country. The local interests of England are pretty sure to be well represented. But every facility should be given for the wants, the wishes, and even, it may be, the foolish requirements of our distant colonies and dependencies, being well heard in the Imperial Parliament.

Again, it cannot be maintained that the honours and dignities bestowed by the crown have for many years, I might say for many reigns, been given with that thought for the public service with which they might have been given. As we all know, these honours have been very often made the rewards of mere party services. Now, the bestowal of such honours and dignities upon deserving colonists would, I believe, be found to be one of the surest means of attaching the colonies to

the mother country, and of blending these various communities into one harmonious whole.

I pass now to another branch of the subject. Observe how our choice of public servants is fettered in every way, from the highest to the lowest. We place a bar, as regards the age of candidates, at the entrance into public departments, which is often very injudicious. The Church in all times has been wiser than the State in this respect; and many of her greatest men in all nations have been those who have served in the army or under the State. An historian could crowd the page with names of eminent persons who have entered into the service of the Church after having begun and having prosecuted another career.

But observe in other and more notorious ways how our choice of men to serve the State is fettered. In many high offices, a man has need to be rich. This is a great pity. It results, in some measure, from our luxurious mode of living. There are few Andrew Marvels in these days. Some there are; but it is very desirable that there should be many more.

Then if a man is to serve in parliament, he

must start with local influence or high connexion. Now I do not, for a moment, maintain that this is utterly unreasonable. On the contrary, I believe it gives a certain stability to a country; but we must also look at the evils of it. There is very difficult work to be done in governing any modern country. Let the world think what it may, there are but few men who are endowed with great aptitude for managing public business, or indeed business of any kind. And the whole of my arguments merely tend to this, that every opportunity should be given for the chance even of finding such men.

I cannot better illustrate my meaning than by a quotation from a speech lately delivered by a veteran servant of the public, a most accomplished man, thoroughly well-informed on the subject he discusses.

Sir James Stephen, speaking of the Prime Minister, thus defines the limits to his powers of choosing fit subordinates.

'The leader selected for this duty (nominally by the Queen, really by the high authority I have mentioned) has a very narrow range of choice. He must

confine himself to his own parliamentary supporters, and of them he can nominate only such as are rich enough to play the hazardous game of political life, and of them again only such commoners as are sure of their re-election, and of them only such persons as can speak with some measure of propriety and acceptance. Therefore, if he has thirty political offices to give, he has very rarely indeed so many as sixty possible candidates for them. From that contracted circle he has to select some fifteen or sixteen men, each of whom ought to bring, and is supposed to bring, to the department over which he is to preside, a knowledge at once special and profound of all the subjects comprised within its official scope and jurisdiction. For example, the Prime Minister must find one candidate familiar with our whole foreign policy; a second intimate with all our internal institutions; a third profound in finance and political economy; a fourth conversant with all the affairs of our Indian Empire; a fifth entirely at home with those of our forty colonies; a sixth, to whom the constitution, wants, and employment of our armies are thoroughly known; a seventh, whose chosen and successful study has long been naval war and nautical affairs; an eighth, who is fitted to act the part of an edile in London, and with whom the science of architecture —Grecian and mediæval—has become a passion; a ninth, whose knowledge of the poor laws, and of the state of the poor, might rival that of Mr. Chadwick

himself; and a tenth, who, without blushing, could issue instructions to our great benefactor, Rowland Hill, for the better conduct of the affairs of the Post-office.'

I shall not give you now any more of my thoughts upon government. I am ashamed that there has already been so much monologue, while we have been sitting here. There go those odious trumpets again! Those are the chief enemies to good government. But I must not proceed; and so, adopting that easy mode of ending, which Dunsford and Tippoo Saib are the authorities for, (a curious pair,) I shall merely exclaim, 'What need I say more?'

ELLESMERE. Your essay, or speech, or whatever it may be called, Milverton, is full of good suggestions—so good, indeed, that they are not the least likely to be attended to. Now don't be angry, for this is the nearest approach to a joke that I am going to make—and a sad and sorry joke it is. But you must know that any proposition which is far-stretching (I will not say far-reaching, lest it should seem like flattery), and which seeks to be far-sighted, has not much chance of being considered in these days. We are all in a desperate hurry: to look on for a year or two ahead

is a very fatiguing, and, as we mostly think, an unnecessary labour.

DUNSFORD. I had hoped that Milverton, when he had got his right man into the right place everywhere, or, at least, one or two men in the right places, would have shown us how they should behave themselves. I have heard him speak of a certain want of communication between men in power and the public, which he maintained to be a great hindrance to the public service. On such occasions I always recollect a saying of Sydney Smith's, which made a great impression upon me: namely, that it was desirable for a good, independent, out-speaking parish priest to be present sometimes in debates on Church matters, which are now left wholly to my Lords, the Bishops. Something of the same kind is, I dare say, often wanted in Parliament for other affairs. Grievances are frequently not well understood on account of the absence of the persons most aggrieved, and of those who could best represent them.

ELLESMERE. There is one statesman of the present day, of whom I always say, that he would have escaped making the blunders that he has made, if he had only ridden more in omnibuses. Instead of allowing him to attend a cabinet council in Downing-street, I should often have put him into an omnibus at Tyburn Gate, and taken him to the Bank and back again. Having been exercised in this way twice a day for a fortnight, he would have become so much

more knowing in the ways and thoughts of common men, that his administration would have lasted three years longer. I should have expected to have been made Lord Chancellor for this good service to the government.

MR. MIDHURST. Great allowances should be made for public men, considering all the worry and turmoil they have to go through. They have no time to pick up information: they have no time for reading anything that demands a somewhat disengaged mind and consecutive study. As an eminent statesman once said jestingly, 'I read only manuscripts,' alluding to the number of papers and memorials he had to get through, and the impossibility of looking much at anything but them.

MISS VERNON. Sir John's proverb would apply well here, 'Nobody knows where the shoe pinches but the wearer;' and I suppose statesmen have not even time to inquire about the pinching of other people's shoes. What does cousin Milverton say to this? Perhaps it is very impertinent in me to offer any remark upon such grave subjects as government.

MILVERTON. No, Mildred, you are quite right: at least such is generally the case. I had once, however, an excellent opportunity of observing the advantage of communication being established between a minister and the public. It was something that occurred within my own experience, and it may appear egotistical to recount it. But the truth is, our

own facts, those which we have seen and known for ourselves, are incalculably the most precious and the most useful to us; and so I will make no further apology for recurring to my own experience.

Several years ago, it was proposed that there should be a considerable change in a large branch of our fiscal laws. The minister, who was to have charge of the bill, invited rather than deprecated assistance and information from all quarters. He was a man who made good use of his underlings, and who liked to give them something to do which would instruct them. Each day, after he had looked over the letters which related to this subject, he handed them to me, desiring me to make an abstract of them, and when they amounted to a considerable number, to bring him a summary of the abstract.

At first, all was confusion; but soon the various complaints and suggestions began to fall into their proper places. One person's experience corrected another's. In this way local, or otherwise peculiar influences became appreciable, and could be eliminated. And, at last, it seemed to me, that from this multitude of communications you could discern what were the real grievances under which the Queen's subjects laboured in respect of those laws, how these grievances might be avoided, and at the same time the revenue be rather increased than diminished. No one man's experience could have taught

you this; and a mere consultation with the officers of the department would never have enabled you to frame so good a measure as you could by confronting official knowledge with the experience of the public.

MR. MIDHURST. Very true: and in no department would this communication be more needful than in the Financial department of the State. I declare I lost two whole days this summer in some botheration about the tax on dogs. Now, though you may not think it, I value my days very much (I have not so many left to me that I can afford to waste them), and I confess I was exceedingly cross at this loss of time. I am a loyal subject to the Queen; I ought to be, having been employed in her service; but, as regards the dog tax, I am henceforward a disaffected person. So far, I am a rebel. I dare say there are a great many other rebels, whose rebellious tendencies have been provoked by needless (to use a favourite adjective of Milverton's) by needless worry upon the smallest matters of taxation.

ELLESMERE. Oh, ho! I remember long ago Mr. Midhurst storming about the assessed taxes. Now, we have got to the root of the matter. Some distant relation of Fixer's will be the cause some day of Midhurst's raising the standard of revolt. 'Down with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and untaxed dogs for ever.' That will be the war cry.

But I forget, I must not joke to-day, as Milverton

is in the humour of Sir Oliver Roundhead, who never laughed himself, and never permitted any of his family to laugh.

MR. MIDHURST. I will tell you, Milverton, what is sure to be said against any special scheme for getting into Parliament men of great ability and large powers of work. It will be said, after all, these must be puny, fastidious people, who have not courage to face popular assemblages, or the skill to ingratiate themselves with large bodies of men: otherwise they would be in Parliament now.

MILVERTON. I know it will be said: but is it true? Want of means, want of local influence, and want of a certain subserviency are the defects which really prevent such men from getting into Parliament.

DUNSFORD. I think that part of the subject which requires to be worked most and to be explained most, is where Milverton said that there was still great room for action, judicious or injudicious, on the part of government.

MILVERTON. I am willing to take issue with anybody on that point. Those who would reduce the functions of government to the lowest—and I claim to be one of that body—must admit, that government has to protect life and property, to take care of the public health, to collect and disburse the public revenue, and to manage Foreign and Colonial affairs. Is not that enough to do? Is there not room for exceeding sagacity, or exceeding folly, in such wide

transactions? And can the wisdom of individuals, working only in their own natural spheres of action, do much to further or prevent the inevitable action of Government in these great matters?

Then there is another thing that is not generally noticed in these discussions upon government. Learned and elaborate writers, like Mr. Buckle for instance, point out, and very truly, that government, when it acts most wisely, generally does so by adopting the wisdom that had its rise in a former generation. They show for example, that free trade had been thought out by studious persons long before it became a public question. I suppose we can all certify to that; and I can remember, as a youth, reading the arguments upon free trade, seeing that they were impregnable, declaring that they would prevail, but not having a notion whether they would do so in my time.

Now, you know, to these philosophic historians a generation of men is not of much importance, or what goes on while that generation is upon the earth. But to the generation itself the questions of the day are all-important. It is everything to them, how far statesmen are inclined to accept or resist the wisdom of remarkable individuals in a former age. Adam Smith writes a deeply thoughtful book, pregnant with good for mankind. Is it not also a great advantage that there should be statesmen in the next generation ready to receive the wisdom of Adam Smith; or, at least, less inclined than ordinary statesmen would

be to offer stout resistance to it? The pace, therefore, at which good measures will gain ground depends much upon our having statesmen who are sensible recipients of other men's wisdom. It is everything for us, who are alive, cumbering the earth, that some wise measures should be adopted in our generation.

In a word, you may talk for ever about the force of public opinion doing this or that; but you will never persuade any rational man that it is not a great blessing for him to have at the head of affairs in his country the most intelligent and capable men that can be found.

ELLESMERE. Certainly. Every practical man must coincide with you. The affairs of the world do not go on by themselves; and highly-placed folly, or idleness, must do incalculable mischief.

Having thus heartily agreed with you, I am sure you will consent to our breaking off the discussion, and taking a walk along that pleasant esplanade. The troops are gone; the trumpets have ceased to sound: and Milverton's good humour will shine out again, when he meets only little boys and girls playing about with their sober mammas and pretty nurses, instead of those clattering, befurred, befeathered, and belaced gentry, called soldiers, for whom of late he has entertained a very considerable aversion. Besides, there is much to be seen at this place, which has known many races, and endured all manner of governments, Belgic, Roman, Carlovingian and Im-

perial. It could tell us a few things. Oh, that towns could speak! But now, come along: I must show you the round church in the citadel, which is like ours at Cambridge.

Ellesmere rose; and the rest of us were not slow to follow him. I think our discussion this day was not unprofitable; and, at any rate, it had the effect of restoring Milverton's good humour. It is a great comfort to a man to be able to talk out his grievances. That is, perhaps, one of the chief advantages inherent in Parliaments.*

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* I have since referred to Mr. Hare's treatise on *the Election of Representatives*, and I extract the following passage which embodies that part of Mr. Hare's proposed law, which Milverton looked upon with most favour. But the whole treatise is well worth studying.

'The adoption of the principle that a quota of electors, by unanimity in their choice, may return a representative, would, with the aid of other arrangements of a mechanical kind, and of no difficulty, enable every individual elector,—who shall consider the choice that the majority of the constituency in which he happens to be registered is disposed to make, as the result of corruption or of intrigue to which he will not lend himself, or who shall entertain opinions with which those of their favourite candidate do not harmonize, or who shall consider that a better or a wiser selection can be made, and that with such a belief it is his duty to make it,—to exercise his vote according to his own judgment. The principle might be embodied in and made effectual by the following law:—

'IV. Every candidate, whose name is contained in the list of candidates hereinafter mentioned, for whom the full quota of votes shall be polled (subject to any qualification or disqualification otherwise imposed by law), shall be returned as a member to serve in Parliament, in manner hereinafter mentioned.

'It will, of course, be immediately perceived, that this law would have consequences far more extensive even than the admission of the voices and opinions of an aggregate of minorities, numbering half a million of electors, great as those consequences would be. The admission and concentration of all those whom the numerical majorities would, if dominant, exclude, in truth involves the representation of all classes and all interests. It is because the simple expression of the numerical majority, under a system of equality in suffrage and district, would deprive all classes, except the most numerous, of any weight in the House of Commons, that the framers of our representative system exhaust themselves in ingenious contrivances to parcel the electors into such divisions that some may neutralize others, and thus reduce to its minimum the evil which they apprehend. More than to diminish the evil effects which must result from the extinction of all political power, except that of the poorer classes, they seem scarcely to hope. The object should rather be, to exclude no legitimate influences, and to give such a scope and direction to all political energy, that every elector, in his sphere, and according to his knowledge, may labour to obtain the maximum of good.'

CHAPTER X.

DESPOTISM.

TO listen to a good discussion of a difficult question is an immense pleasure to me. That is not to be wondered at, for I do not often have the pleasure of listening to good discussions. But it surprises me to find that Ellesmere, whose life is spent in listening to arguments, and inventing them, should be so fond of discussion as he is. We were walking together up and down the public gardens at Metz, when he began to deplore to me that we had come to the end of our resources in regard to providing subjects for discussion. 'You will not be persuaded, I fear, to give us another essay on a kindred subject to pleasantness. I could not stand another essay from Mr. Midhurst, even if we could get one from him. I have exhausted myself in my elaborate and truthful discourse 'On the Arts of Self-advancement.' And, as for the

girls, they cannot write. Doubtless they send home very long letters to their friends, in which they describe the costume of the peasantry, and foreign ways and habits of all kinds, for these she-creatures are very observant. But if we could turn one of their letters into an essay, it would not give room for large discussion. Our only hope is Milverton; and he has abjured essay-writing. Still, if we can get him to give us such an outpouring upon any other subject as we had yesterday upon government, it is nearly as well for us, as if we had something that was carefully planned and scrupulously worked out. I have always said, as you know, that pamphlets are excellent reading, because a man does not say in them more than he is full of at the time. He has not to look about for topics. The moment that you look about for topics you are in danger of becoming sophistical, and, at least, of saying something that you have not ruminated over—something that you have not had second or third thoughts about. I, therefore, should be well content if we could get another speech from Milverton; and I think I see my way to getting it. He is evidently most apprehensive of war. He is

evidently troubled in his mind about despotism. You will see that, unless I manage very badly, I shall get an outburst from him upon that subject. It will be arrived at in a very round-about manner. All you will have to do will be to back me up when the opportunity occurs.'

We said no more about the matter then, and I left Ellesmere to manage his plan in his own fashion.

In the afternoon, we were sitting on a bench in these pleasant gardens at Metz, all except Ellesmere, who had stayed at home to answer his letters. Suddenly, we saw him running towards us with an expression of terror on his countenance. I saw directly that it was feigned, and whispered to Mildred that it was so, fearing lest she should be alarmed. The moment he joined us, he began to talk vehemently.

ELLESMERE. Consult with me, Milverton; comfort me; do something to restore my peace of mind. What is the good of a friend, if he cannot find some comfort for one even in the most deplorable circumstances? Such an event is going to happen! It is all over with us. The workhouse stares me in the

face; and an ugly building it generally is to stare at one.

MILVERTON. Good gracious! What has happened? Has Louis Napoleon——

ELLESMERE. No, no: Louis d'or, not Louis Napoleon, is in fault. The girls here will laugh at my distress, but they have no fine feelings. You men will pity me. I have just been reading something which seems to prove to me conclusively that gold will fall in value, and I have been working all my life for gold. My investments are such as I see political economists declare are sure to suffer first.

[Ellesmere has an additional pleasure in talking in this way from the hope of teasing Mildred, but she understands him better now, and could not be made to believe that he is a great lover of money.]

I have been working all my life, I say, for guineas, which are now to turn into half-guineas. Oh dear, oh dear! I am a gulled and swindled individual. I shall write to everybody to pay me double what they have paid me; and if I invent another essay for Dunsford, I shall charge him for it at the rate of a sack of corn per line. Indeed, I shall take nothing now but corn by way of fees, and I shall have a granary in Pump-court.

But seriously, Milverton, is it not dreadful? I

dare say, though, you do not feel it as I do. How few people feel as they ought for poor persons of property! [Here Ellesmere assumed a whining mendicant tone that was irresistibly ludicrous.] All mine is in funds and mortgages. Has anybody here got a bit of land to sell? As for that wretch Milverton, the disaster evidently does not come with any great shock upon him. He has probably been pothering about it for a long time.

MILVERTON. Yes, I have foreseen for many years that a great rise of prices must come. But then I have had peculiar advantages for studying the subject. The rise of prices which took place in Europe after the Conquest of Peru is familiar to me.

MR. MIDHURST. Have you any facts? It is a question of immense interest.

MILVERTON. Were we at home, I have no doubt I could rout out an abundance of facts. Some I can remember now. The rise in the price of land was enormous. I am almost afraid to tell you the instances that I have seen quoted as regards those times. Still I can only give you the facts as I found them set down. I have seen it stated, for instance, that a *mayorasgo* (that means an estate of inheritance), of which the fee-simple was bought at a little over a hundred pounds just before the Conquest of Peru, produced in the early part of the next century sixteen hundred pounds a year. Then, a man would leave land for the purpose of mass being said for his

soul in a particular convent, and for the feeding of the convent for that day on which the mass was to be said. This land produced, before the conquest, about five shillings per annum. After the conquest it produced one hundred and eighty pounds. These instances seem almost too extravagant to mention. There is, however, another, which I remember, and which I am sure does not exaggerate the rise of prices. Garcilasso de La Vega (from whom I derived the statements I have just made) mentions that in the year fifteen hundred and sixty he bought a pair of shoes for a *real* and a half at Seville, and that in the year sixteen hundred and thirteen a similar pair of shoes cost at Cordova five *reals*, although Cordova was a cheaper place than Seville.* You will observe that the rise of prices took place after the mines of Peru began to produce largely. We have a statement, based upon official evidence, that from one mine alone there came to Spain, and were registered, no less than three hundred millions of *pesos* of silver.

* Milverton afterwards furnished me with the passage. 'De la propria manera ha crescido el valor, y precio de todas las demás cosas que se gastan en la Republica, asi de bastimento, como de vestido, y calçado, que todo ha subido de precio de la manera que se ha dicho; y todavia sube, que el Año de mil y quinientos y sesenta, que entré en España, me costaron los dos primeros pares de çapatos de Cordovan, que en Sevilla rompi, á real y medio cada par; y oi, que es Año de mil y seiscientos y trece, valen en Cordova los de aquel jaez, que eran de una suela, cinco reales, con ser Cordova Ciudad mas barata que Sevilla.'—*Historia general del Peru*, parte 2, lib. 1, cap. 6.

A *peso* is equivalent to four shillings and eightpence farthing.

ELLESMERE. This is atrocious. I come to this man for comfort; and he takes up the large hammer of History, and knocks me down with it. I suppose he thinks that to be stunned and rendered insensible is some comfort.

MILVERTON. I could give you other instances in which estates changed in value from maravedis to ducats. Two hundred maravedis were worth one shilling and twopence: a ducat was worth between four and five shillings.

ELLESMERE. You seem to delight in all this.

MILVERTON. Well, I am not so very unhappy. There are a good many indebted people in the world, and they will be better off. There are a good many national debts, and these will press less heavily upon the poor taxpayers.

MR. MIDHURST. Warlike monarchs, however, will take care to increase the national debts, so that the people will gain very little advantage from the fall in gold.

MILVERTON. 'Aye; there's the rub.' Not only will they do that, but by artificial restrictions of all kinds they will probably prevent the influx of gold having its due effect gradually; and the fall will come with a crash.

ELLESMERE. Hurrah for Despotism! At least it may keep us right for our time.

MILVERTON. How can you be so absurd, Ellesmere!

ELLESMERE. Do not be an enraged political economist. Such people, if you doubt their doctrines for a moment, become as furious as great scholars when their aorists and Greek articles are attacked. You have only to mention the word 'value' in a circle of political economists; and there is sure to be, what the vulgar call, a shindy. But that is not the point at present. The question is about despotisms. You ideologists (I delight in that word of Napoleon's) are sure to be full of denunciations against despotism. But prove your words, my man. Are not the streets charmingly clean in towns ruled over by a despot? How orderly everything is! And then one is not bothered by leading articles in newspapers. What things of that kind there are, one need not read, because they contain no information, and are allowed to argue only in one direction. This is an immense saving of time and trouble.

I need not proceed with this conversation. The reader, who is in the plot, will see that Ellesmere had gained his point. Milverton became more vehement, and Ellesmere more provoking. Finally, Milverton was worked up into promising that he would give us a bit of his mind on the subject of Despotism. In-

deed, he pledged himself to do so in the course of that day; and, meeting afterwards at the same spot, Milverton, with the aid of a few notes, made the following speech to us.

Even in affairs that are purely secular it must be admitted that the Old Testament is a mine of wisdom. And, perhaps, there are few transactions recorded in it more profoundly instructive than the appointment of the first king who ruled over Israel. As every word requires to be pondered, I will read you part of the chapter from Samuel, in which he declares what will be the doings of this king whom the people demand to have set over them; and I am sure you will say that, if it had been written yesterday, it could hardly be more applicable than it is to the present state of human affairs.

'Now, therefore, hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

'And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king.

'And he said, This will be the manner of the king

that shall reign over you; he will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.

'And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties, and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

'And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

'And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

'And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

'And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.

'He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

'And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day.

'Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel: and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord.

'And the Lord said to Samuel, hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.'*

And the end of it was, as it has been observed with much irony, that Saul went out to seek his father Kish's asses, and found a people to rule over.

The position of despotism is untenable in modern times. We have ceased to believe in the divine right of monarchs. The Russian peasant may be taught, and haply may believe, that his Czar is 'an emanation from the Deity.' But people, who are the least advanced in civilization, do not believe that one man is more an emanation from the Deity than another.

Again, arts, sciences, and even manual dexterities are so numerous and various now that no one man can excel in a twentieth part of them. In very early ages there was but one great art—the art of war. In that, the despotic monarch might be, or might have been, the foremost man in his dominions; and might by nature have some claim to kingship.

Either a despot represents and acts with the

* 1st Samuel, chap. viii. vv. 9 to 22.

wisdom of the majority of the nation; or he does not. If he does, all reasonable people will admit that the wise part of the nation ought to have an opportunity of acting for itself, and thereby strengthening and increasing its wisdom. If he does not act according to this wisdom, he is merely sustaining a high part of forcible folly. It is clearly better that he should be away.

But it may be contended that there is often a necessity for speed of action, which speed can only be ensured by the concentration of power in one hand. This necessity rarely occurs. When it did occur amongst the Romans, we know how it was provided for by a temporary Dictatorship. In nine cases out of ten, this speed of action is injurious to the world; and, in the tenth, which is generally some grand occasion for defence, it is not found by experience that constitutional governments are signally wanting.

It is true that great purposes have been fulfilled and great benefits attained, indirectly, by despotism. Tribes have thus been consolidated into nations. One language has been made to prevail over a large extent of country which would otherwise have been

afflicted by fifty different dialects. And, which is perhaps the greatest benefit, Despotism has counteracted Oligarchy, and has been the means whereby the lowest class of all in the community has been considerably raised: despotism has aided in doing away with serfdom. Two of the before-named purposes have been already fulfilled throughout the earth: the third is in process of fulfilment; and it must, now, I think, be admitted that in civilized countries despotism is rather out of date.

It has been urged in favour of despotisms that Art has flourished under them. On the other hand, it is contended that the greatest works of art have been effected by free men in states that were at any rate partially free. The controversy does not appear to me of much importance. If it could be proved that Art had remarkably flourished under despotisms, I should merely say in answer that Art is but a small thing in the life of nations; and that it interests, comparatively speaking, but a few people. I doubt, however, whether throughout all time the highest Artists have not been singularly free men and such as have maintained anything but a servile position towards

the greatest personages with whom they came in contact. We all know how Titian lived with Charles the Fifth, and with Francis the First.

This brings me naturally to another branch of the subject which is very difficult to work out well, because it requires a minute knowledge of other times. Now the only times that I know with some intimacy are those of Charles the Fifth; and I can only say that Charles the Fifth's government, which might easily be classed amongst despotisms, was not what we should call a despotism. The way in which we men are most easily deluded in argument is this. We use words of a general character under which in our minds we have arranged bundles of qualities, and these words do not quite correspond with the realities in life which they are supposed to correspond with. Hence, if we would be other than pedants, we must perpetually recur to the meaning of our words, compare them with the real things to which we are applying these words, and introduce the modifications that are required when we are discussing real things. To use the homely French proverb, *Il y a fagots, et fagots;* there are despotisms

and despotisms; — which means that despotisms differ immensely in character.

As a notable instance of this, the despotism in a country that is surrounded by neighbouring free countries, will be a very different thing, and will act very differently, from the despotism which is neighboured by despotic powers—just as Catholicism is deeply affected by Protestantism, and Protestantism by Catholicism. If either of these great powers were in the world alone, it would act very differently from what it does. But each keeps the other greatly in order. And so, a despotic government, which is blessed with a free government for a neighbour, has a mirror in which her features may sometimes be distorted, but in which there is often a true image of her to be seen,—and she cannot help looking at it occasionally.

Then there is the despotism based upon conquest, which differs very much from the despotism that has arisen out of tumult and disorder. Perhaps the ugliest form of despotism is that which not only has arisen out of a tumultuous democracy, but which perpetually refers to some one act of democracy as the source of

its power. This reference is in general a farce. It corresponds to what you read of in books, of an imaginary contract entered into, at some unknown time, between a monarch and his people, but which forms a good starting point for writers who delight in dealing with forms of government in the abstract.

Nowhere, perhaps, is the way more clearly seen in which a tyranny grows out of an appeal to democracy, than in the history of Florence.

Over and over again, at critical periods, the populace were summoned by the great bell into the grand square, to hold a *parlamento*. Sometimes there were armed men in the adjoining palace. The populace created what was called a Balia*—that is, they gave fifty or

* In 1393, after a partial movement in behalf of the vanquished faction, they assembled a parliament, and established what was technically called at Florence, a Balia. This was a temporary delegation of sovereignty to a number, generally a considerable number, of citizens, who, during the period of their dictatorship, named the magistrates, instead of drawing them by lot, and banished suspected individuals. A precedent so dangerous was eventually fatal to themselves, and to the freedom of their country.—HALLAM'S *Middle Ages*, vol. i. p. 536.

See also the account of the restoration of the Medici, in Guicciardini, which is well worth consideration.

Convocò subito, così proponendo Giuliano dei Medici, in sulla piazza del palazzo col suono della campana grossa il popolo al

sixty persons, belonging to the predominant faction, despotic power to settle the state, and to name the officers of government. If we consider it, nothing can well be more absurd than seeking to find a just basis for power in a momentary appeal to an enthusiastic or a frightened populace. It is a mockery of deliberation, worthy of a Mephistopheles, to call people into council for one occasion, when they are to have no opportunity of re-considering their decisions. It would be a mockery, even if the assemblage were composed of wise, grave persons, utterly unfettered by fear, or undisturbed by faction, in their deliberations; but for whom in their corporate capacity there was to be no existence to-morrow.

Again, the despotism that is allied to cen-

parlamento, dove quegli, che vi andarono essendo circondati dalle armi dei soldati, e dei giovani della Città, che avevano prese le armi per i Medici, consentirono, che a circa cinquanta Cittadini, nominati secondo la volontà del Cardinale, fosse data sopra le cose pubbliche la medesima autorità, che aveva tutto il popolo (chiamano i Fiorentini questa potestà così ampla Balia): per decreto dei quali, ridotto il governo a quella forma, che soleva essere innanzi all' anno mille quattrocento novantaquattro, e messa una guardia di soldati ferma al palazzo, ripigliarono i Medici quella medesima grandezza, ma governandola più imperiosamente, e con arbitrio più assoluto di quello, che soleva avere il padre loro.—*Istoria d' Italia*, libro undecimo.

tralization differs immensely from the despotism that may flourish at the centre, but which does not aim to direct minutely the extremities. Considerable felicity and much freedom of thought and action might exist in a country where the people were accustomed to manage all their local affairs, and were not interrupted or controlled in those affairs by a despotism which contented itself with acting only upon great occasions. In the Middle Ages there were many such forms of government. Practically a town managed itself. The sovereign got what money he could from it: obtained what men-at-arms he could persuade or force to follow his banner; but in all minor matters the town was greatly left to itself. The men in that town formed their opinions for themselves upon all manner of subjects. No despotism stretched out its interfering hand to regulate every public work. No ideas bred at the centre prevailed over the modes of thought, the habits, and the ways of the population of this town. Ghent lived the life that seemed to Ghent most profitable and most pleasurable. Valladolid, too, lived its life after its own fashion, quite different from

the life of Ghent; and perhaps neither of these lives was at all similar to, or constrained by the life at the Court of the so-called despot who ruled over both these towns.

I do not say that this form of government can be compared with constitutional government, inasmuch as it lacks security. The moment that a great question arose, such as a religious difference, the despot forthwith desired to impress his own views upon all his subjects, tyranny began to act vivaciously, and the common life in all these towns was sought to be regulated by the fancy of the despot. We must not, however, confound such a despotism, as it acts in ordinary times, with one that is based upon conquest or democracy, which is addicted to centralization, and which inevitably seeks to impress its notions upon all the minds that come under its fatal sway.

I have said enough upon the above head to show that for practical purposes each despotism must be considered by itself with all its surroundings and with all the peculiarities that are inherent to it.

I now bring forward two arguments of great

weight, as it seems to me, derived from a quarter to which we do not generally look for arguments against despotism. All those who have studied the works of Machiavelli, must have noticed how pervading a thought it was with that author, that the dispositions of ruling men should coincide with the times in which they live. In his chapter on Fortune he points out how one disposition is good now, and another disposition good then, according as it corresponds with the nature of the times. His favourite instance is that of Pope Julius the Second, whose 'impetus and fury' so well accorded with the temper of the times, that all his enterprises succeeded. Machiavelli argues that if other times of a different character had come, that Pope would have been ruined, for he imagines that the Pope's furious temper would have remained the same.* Another instance

* Papa Giulio II. procedette in tutto il tempo del suo Pontificato con impeto e con furia, perchè i tempi l'accompagnarono bene, gli riuscirono le sue imprese tutte. Ma se fussero venuti altri tempi, ch' avessero ricerco altro consiglio, di necessità rovinava; perchè non arebbe mutato nè modo, nè ordine nel maneggiarsi.—*Discorsi sopra la Prima Deca di Tito Livio*, libro terzo.

Condusse adunque Giulio con la sua mossa impetuosa quello

which Machiavelli adduces is to be observed in the conduct of the Roman Fabius. There was a time when the dilatory disposition of Fabius was the salvation of the state. There came another time, even in the life of Fabius, when that disposition, if it had prevailed in the Roman Senate, might have ruined the affairs of Rome by preventing Scipio from carrying the war into Africa. A third instance (and all his instances are worth attending to) is that of Piero Soderini, the Gonfaloniere of Florence, who conducted all his affairs with gentleness and humanity. But sterner times came. Soderini's gentleness was out of place; and he and his country were ruined.* Now comes the great argument of Machiavelli against despotic power. '*Hence*,' he says, '*it arises that a republic* [under the word republic we may of course include limited monarchy] *has longer life and enjoys good fortune much longer than a despotism; since a republic can accommodate*

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che mai altro Pontefice con tutta l' umana prudenza avrebbe condotto; perchè se egli aspettava di partirsi da Roma con le conclusioni ferme, e tutte le cose ordinate, come qualunque altro Pontefice arebbe fatto, ma non gli riusciva.—*Il Principe*, capitolo 25.

* See GUICCIARDINI, *Istoria d' Italia*, libro undecimo.

*itself better than a Prince can to the diversity of times, by reason of the diversity of citizens which are in it. For a man that is accustomed to proceed in one fashion, as it has been said, does not ever change; and it follows by necessity that when the times change into such as are unfitted for his mode of procedure, he is ruined.'**

The above is a great argument, worthy of large consideration. For my own part I think it falls under a much higher law than has yet been indicated. Surely, cultivated thought is one of the great sources of capital in a nation. The main objection to slavery is that we lose so much thought by it. The advantage of any education of the humble classes is that we gain so much additional thought by it. Inventions of all kinds spring up among a people that are in the least degree educated. You give a village boy one or two books to read, and they perhaps lead him to a great invention or an

* Di qui nasce che una repubblica ha maggior vita, ed ha più lungamente buona fortuna che un principato; perchè ella può meglio accomodarsi alla diversità de' temporali, per la diversità de' cittadini che sono in quella, che non può un principe. Perchè un uomo che sia consueto a procedere in un modo, non si muta mai, come è detto, e conviene di necessità, quando si mutano i tempi disformi a quel suo modo, che rovini.—*Discorsi sopra la Prima Deca di Tito Livio*, libro terzo.

important discovery, which he might never have made, or, even if he had made, might never have been able to express, but for this small amount of education.

If Newton had been an uneducated pauper, we should have had no *Principia*. There would have been grand thoughts in a dumb man; but the state would have reaped no benefit. Whereas the advantage that the state has received from Newton is incalculable.

This however is rather the social aspect of the question. Machiavelli kept closely to politics, and from that point of view the advantage of diversity of mind is also incalculable. That nation is starved in political thought, where there is no diversity of mind employed in politics.

I proceed to another argument, suggested to me by Machiavelli, but which I am not aware of his having stated anywhere. To speak frankly, I think it is more important than his own. I feel sure that, had he lived in our times, it would have occurred to him, and he would have made great use of it.

Throughout, Machiavelli supposes that his

Prince, or ruling person, will never change his mode of action. I would not presume to set myself up against such a master of thought as Machiavelli; but in this I think he goes too far. I fancy that, if I were a ruling person, I could change my mode of action. Every one of you here present fancies the same. You think that you could at one time have played the part of Fabius, and at another that of Scipio. You think you could now have been a discreet Pope, like Leo the Tenth, and now a tempestuous one like Julius the Second. Machiavelli holds the contrary, and gives two reasons for it. First, that we cannot oppose that to which nature inclines us: secondly, that, having found one mode of action succeed, it is impossible to persuade ourselves that we can gain any benefit by taking another course.* Experience rather goes to confirm his view of the case; for very few persons do change their

* E che noi non ci possiamo mutare, ne sono cagione due cose. L' una, che noi non ci possiamo opporre a quello, a che c' inclina la natura. L' altra, che avendo uno con un modo di procedere prosperato assai, non è possibile persuadergli che possa far bene a procedere altrimenti; donde ne nasce che in un uomo la fortuna varia, perchè ella varia i tempi, ed egli non varia i modi. *Discorsi sopra la Prima Deca di Tito Livio*, libro terzo.

modes of action. But the great point is, that whether, in consonance with the times, we could change our mode of action or not, *we should never be able to persuade other people that we had changed it.* It is almost impossible to over-rate the damnatory nature of this supposed fixity of policy in a state. I have not the least doubt that Spain owes her downfal to the belief that prevailed throughout Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in a fixed policy of aggressive domination on her part, which policy had been adopted by one or two of her monarchs, but which doubtless frightened Europe long after there was any occasion for alarm. My argument, then, is,—not only that a wholesome change of policy can more easily prevail in a free government, but that it can be believed in and acted upon by other nations. Suppose a monarch to show great craft and deep designs of aggression. It is in vain that he becomes a wiser man, and changes his policy. The world is slow, and justly slow, to give him credit for the change. And his people may be ruined because they have no legitimate means of proving that the policy of their country has

changed. The above are not fanciful considerations: they depend upon laws of the human mind, and are applicable everywhere and in all times. Had George the Third been a despotic monarch, followed by despotic successors, how slow our colonies would have been to believe that his or his successors' policy had changed towards them, even if it had done so. Thus the real rigidity of despotism and its supposed rigidity are both alike injurious to a nation in its dealings with surrounding nations.

ELLESMERE. Forgive me for interrupting; but is that Machiavelli's chief view of Fortune, namely, that it depends upon the disposition of the fortunate falling in with the temper and the circumstances of the times?

MILVERTON. Yes, with this exception, that it is better to be impetuous than cautious, because Fortune is a woman, and therefore friendly to the young, who with audacity command her.* And I think he would go so far (in which I do not at all agree with him) as to maintain that a despotism could not arise except in a corrupt state.† I think it right to tell

* E però sempre, come donna, è amica de' giovani, perchè sono meno rispettivi, più feroci, e con più audacia la comandano.—*Il Principe*, cap. 25.

† Sarebbe adunque stato Manlio un uomo raro e memorabile, se

you this, as my arguments hereafter would rather go to prove the contrary. And as you have interrupted me here, I may as well mention to you, that I shall not go into any arguments against despotism founded on the rights of man. That branch of the subject has often been discussed. We know nearly all that can be said about it; and I would rather consider the matter in a practical point of view, taking things as they are before us. It is only at rare intervals that these abstract questions about the rights of man, and the like, have any great effect upon the world.

It is not until men have largely thought over and investigated the evils that flow from despotism, that they can thoroughly sympathize with the deep fear that possessed the ancient democracies of Greece, and can tolerate the extraordinary means which those democracies took to prevent their falling under a despot.

Ostracism seems a very harsh and almost a

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fusse nato in una città corrotta. E però debbono i cittadini che nelle repubbliche fanno alcuna impresa o in favore della libertà, o in favore della tirannide, considerare il soggetto che eglino hanno, giudicare da quello la difficultà delle imprese loro. Perchè tanto è difficile e pericoloso voler fare libero un popolo che voglia viver servo, quanto è voler fare servo un popolo, che voglia vivere libero.—*Discorsi sopra la Prima Deca di Tito Livio*, libro terzo.

ludicrous method of preventing the existence of absolute power. But it is much more wise perhaps than has been generally imagined. The ostracised person was not touched in body, goods, or estate. He was merely told by his fellow-citizens, 'You are becoming too powerful to live amongst us. With all respect for your merits, indeed in consequence of those merits, we decline to have the benefit of your society.' The last time that ostracism was used was against a mere demagogue; and this use of it brought the custom into disrepute.

It must not be supposed, however, that despotism ever arises without fitting antecedents —that it springs out of the earth fully armed, and ready to commence its natural career of torpifying activity. It is generally the product of some previous wrong-doing. Samuel's sons judged the people unrighteously; and the Israelites clamoured for a king. Indeed the state of human affairs is always significantly illustrated by the course of a river amidst yielding land. The stream makes an indent on this side of its banks, meets with some obstruction at last, and is thrown off with violence to the other side, where it makes a

similar indentation. You foresee that it will be so; and thus, too, in political affairs, after the long experience which history gives us, we no sooner see an indent made by democracy, especially if made with violence, than we feel sure that there will be a similar one made at no great distance of time by despotism. Violence is never childless. And, what is worse, her children always resemble her most closely. It has at last become quite a common-place thing to trace the alternations of extreme political power. The practical result to be drawn from such observations is that when a people have got anything like a tolerable government they should go on enduring, improving, amending, in a spirit of great sobriety, being perfectly aware that any change that is extravagant and immoderate is but the beginning of a sinuous course of extravagance and immoderation.

The greatest evil of despotism is the gradual destruction of thought which takes place under it. This point has been touched upon, in reference to Machiavelli's argument in favour of a republic; but it requires to be worked out a little in detail. Men by degrees find out that

it is not worth while to think much, while they are living under a despotic government. The whole nation, perhaps, — at least the thinking part of it,—is against a particular course being adopted. The despot acts. The thoughts of thoughtful men thereupon vanish into the air. The crowd, which loves the noise and bustle of action, at once applauds the despot's act. Even the thoughtful men are carried away by the force of circumstances, and have to reconstruct their plans and projects, the former ones having become hopeless for the moment.* Ultimately they find out how little force they have in public affairs, and they cease to think about them otherwise than as the crowd thinks. At last you have but one mind for a great country; and we may appeal to the history of the world to say whether that one mind has generally proved itself of such a colossal nature as to justify its dwarfing all other minds into political uselessness.

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* Milverton's words have received a strong confirmation from recent events. Does anybody suppose that before January last any ten Frenchmen cared sufficiently about the state of Italy to go to war to remedy it? [D.]

There are several considerations which should lead the world to have the greatest dread of a nascent power that, even remotely, threatens to become extreme. The tendency of all power is to accretion, and, indeed, to very rapid accretion. Observe the rise and progress of despotism. You have at first to fight it behind a wall. Those, who early discern the rising mischief, meet with but lukewarm friends and companions, who tell them, 'See, it is only behind a wall; we can easily rush over the barrier, if the creature should misbehave itself.' Then it mounts behind a parapet; then it throws out slight defences; soon it is at the top of a great tower, commanding a system of fortifications, whence it surveys and overawes the whole district, and from which it will not be dislodged until rivers of blood have flowed in defending and attacking it.

There is a very common saying (especially amongst those who live under a constitutional government) which requires to be carefully considered, as it tends to further and to favour despotism. Commenting upon another nation, they exclaim, 'Those people will not endure a

despotism long; and, if they do so, they deserve to have it.' Does anybody who says this know what he talks about? Has he lived under a despotism? Has he ever considered the enormous difficulty which any one has to encounter who makes the slightest move towards liberty, while living under a despotic government? All the machinery of social life is ranged against this man. Not only the mechanism of brute-force, but the strongest springs of human action are opposed to him. Except in times of great commotion the world is ruled by middle-aged people. Those middle-aged people are the fathers of families. To them the families are nearly everything. They may deplore the state of public affairs, but those affairs occupy only their second thoughts. The first thoughts of every day are devoted to the protection and furtherance of the family. 'The powers that be' are apt to become the ruling divinities of every domestic household. If it were not for youths, and for the common people, whose families are not, after all, such a weight upon them as upon the middle classes, there would scarcely ever be such a thing as a change of dynasty, or an outbreak

against government. And then remember those words of Wordsworth, the most significant perhaps that he ever wrote—

> . . . . But the sense of most
> In abject sympathy with power is lost.

It will not do therefore to say, that if people endure a despotism, they deserve it. Let any man only put himself in imagination in the place of another who sincerely abhors and abjures despotic government, but who lives under a despotism. Will you tell me what he is to do? Picture him as residing in some country town. The press is against him. The people, until they come to be very much pinched, are not with him. The local ministers of the despot are wary and vigilant, longing to prove their fidelity by severe interference with any person suspected to be hostile to the government. Spies, if not in his own household, are not far off from him. His thoughts are worth money. And he lives in a country town, subject to the scrutiny which always exists in such places. The highest natures may well bend under such a yoke as this, from which they can see so little chance of escaping; and it is very ungenerous for free men to utter any reproaches against a

man who is in the singularly helpless situation that I have just described.

Again, would you have him address the despot directly? You feel that he might as well address the sea, and recommend the breakers when they are bounding in upon the shore to comport themselves wisely and gently. On the other hand, with a mob, unless it be a hired one, you have always some chance of being heard. We must admit that Lamartine and other speakers did wonderful things for humanity in 1848. And the moment you have to address any assemblage less tumultuous than a mob, your chance of being fairly heard rises as the assemblage is less and less like a mob, until, in such a body as the House of Commons in England, the most unpopular man, uttering the most unpopular sentiments, is nearly sure of a fair hearing if he does not violate decorum grossly in the expression of his sentiments. This one fact alone ought to convince those who have any hankering after despotism (and there always are such men) of the immense disadvantages under which good thought and valid reasoning lie when they have to deal with a despotic government.

In considering despotism we naturally turn to think how it is that we in Great Britain have escaped it. There have doubtless been many circumstances in our favour. Some of these are purely physical, such as our insular position. Some are apparently due to mere good fortune; but, if there is any one moral cause, I suppose it is to be found in the tendency amongst us not to press anything too far.* This, though the result partly of national temperament, is now confirmed by a long experience of Constitutional Government, and by habitual self-rule. In commenting upon other nations we have greatly to beware of making unjust remarks upon the early beginnings of constitutional government. I suspect that few of us are quite without blame in what we have said when we were looking on at the debates of infant Assemblies in neigh-

* As a curious illustration of this, a Conservative lecturer addressed a large assemblage of working people a little time ago, and pointed out to them that if an extreme Reform bill were carried, all power would fall into their hands, which he justly maintained would be a great evil. Some of them called upon him the next morning, and told him that this was a point they had never before considered, and of which they saw the full importance. What may not be hoped from a people who can be so reasonable even when their own interests are concerned?

bouring nations. I know one man who much repents that he ever made a severe comment upon the proceedings of the last Legislative Assembly in France, being now aware how irrational it is to expect perfect fairness and temper in debate amongst any people who have not been long accustomed to freedom of discussion.

We never exhaust the attack upon any institution until we have described the good that there may be in it, and shown how much or how little that good is worth. And therefore it is but prudent as well as right to show what despotism can do. It can cleanse and beautify a city. It can maintain the strictest order. It is great in public works. In foreign affairs it can act with a promptitude and clearness of resolve unknown to limited monarchies. It can occasionally perform signal acts of public charity. But in all that it does, good or bad, there is the fatal flaw that it destroys individual independence. The thing wished for is done; but the public spirit, which is the most valuable part of the deed when it is done in a free country, is gradually undermined in a despotism. And then, again, the advance made

is never sure. It perishes perhaps with one man's life. Whereas the slow advances that are accomplished after much discussion, varied opposition, and the warfare of all kinds of interests, is in its nature permanent; and, what is more important, is full of the power of growth. A despotic Mayor or Prefet can order that a town shall be well drained and regulated in every respect. Fine streets and public fountains spring up under his potent orders. But the slow improvement that is carried out in a town, where there are discussions and battles about everything that is to be done, is deeply triumphant when it does come. Hundreds of well-informed persons are pledged to it. The improvement does not drop down with the life of an individual. It is a live thing that is planted: it is not something merely stuck into the ground, that has no root to it. It will flourish even in evil times, because in getting any root at all it has acquired large powers of endurance. It may have its reverses, but, if really a good thing, it is not liable to utter destruction. There is something of Potemkin's sham villages, which he got up to show the Empress Catherine on

her journeys, in all the whitewashed triumphs of despotism.

It may be a question whether despotisms have been more aggressive than other forms of government. It would be very difficult to prove anything in such a question, because, hitherto, there has been such a preponderance of despotism in the world. Those, who are hostile to despotic government, would point to Xerxes, Alexander, Napoleon, and a host of other conquerors and devastators who have been despotic monarchs. The other side would bring forward the histories of Athens, Rome, Carthage, and Venice, to show that Republics have likewise been very much addicted to aggression. I have myself no doubt upon the question, and feel confident that despotisms are more dangerous to the peace of the world than any other forms of government. At the same time I feel the full difficulty of proving this. One thing, however, I think, that a careful study of history would bring out before mankind: namely, that the wars undertaken by republics have generally been of a far more practical

character than those undertaken by despotic monarchs. I mean that the republics have seen more to gain that was conducive, or was thought to be conducive, to the public interest than despotic monarchs have ever seen in their wars. The reason is obvious. In these free governments no one man's interest acquires a preponderating weight; and the war will not go on if the people do not somehow or other persuade themselves that they have an interest in its continuance. If I am right in this supposition, it must be acknowledged that there is immense gain for the world whenever the government of a great people ceases to be despotic. As an instance of what I mean, take the war between Rome and Carthage,—it was a war for existence. Then compare that with the romantic and comparatively purposeless expedition of an Alexander. Whenever you can get such a thing as a debate upon a war in a public assembly, it is, I contend, a great advantage for mankind. On the other hand, the most mischievous things for mankind are settled by two or three men in the quiet cabinets of despotic princes.

There are a great many persons who may

think that there is no occasion whatever for discussing the question of despotism. They are quite convinced about it, and they are apt to think that every one else is. But some of the most important writers of the present age are by no means convinced of the preponderant evils of despotism.*

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* I subjoin a passage from Congreve's *Roman Empire of the West*, as a good illustration of the views of these writers. 'That system [the constitutional], with its fictions and its indirect action, may offer advantages at certain times—as, historically, it has done with us—but, on the whole, I think it alien to good government. It has ever failed,—and I appeal to the history of England in support of my assertion, and not merely to the present disgraceful state of our government, though that is so much in accordance with past history as to exonerate, in a measure, the men at the expense of the system;—it is failing you now, in the presence of real dangers and war. It is of more than doubtful advantage in peace. The people of this country must have felt of late that it is not a system of checks, with the ultimate irresponsibility that is its result, but a vigorous unity of administration, that is required for the right conduct of a war. The poor of this country feel the effects, though they may not be aware of the cause, of the want of a vigorous central executive—of a government, in short, in the place of parliamentary no-government. It may be long before the necessity of so great a political change is acknowledged, but it is, at any rate, a possibility that it should be again acknowledged as it has been; and it would be desirable, that the atmosphere of political discussion should be free enough to admit of such questions being agitated, which, speaking generally, is hardly the case. For myself, I heartily wish that the time were come when we were clear of the government of boards, call them a cabinet or a vestry, with all

Such men see more clearly than others the short-comings of constitutional government. Being persons of sensitive natures, they deplore these short-comings deeply. They become tired, too, of the thoughtless praise constantly bestowed by common-place, well-to-do people on the institutions of their country, and gradually they find themselves lapsing into the idea that dictatorial government is the preferable thing. I beg to call their attention to the following statement. For children the despotic government may be admirable; and, if a nation is never to be permitted to grow out of childishness, by all means let it abide under despotism. But if the child is to become a boy, then there come the difficulties of boyhood. The question is, do you dislike growth? With growth there will always come a new set of difficulties. Nobody can deplore more than I do the occasional errors and inefficiencies of parliamentary government; but to suppose that, as the years go on, no remedy

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their complication of personal and local interests, and under the government of one—a protector or dictator, if you like to call him so—the name is unimportant: the essential is, that he should be one who would rule England as she was ruled by Cromwell.'—pp. 60, 61. London, 1855.

will be found, or at least attempted, for these difficulties, is to manifest a degree of hopelessness which is not warranted by any phase of our past history. I must also remark that constitutional government is as yet very young and comparatively immature. Finally, there is one argument which, when addressed to a nation, should make it very wary of parting with any form of constitutional government which it has once laid hold of. Let it only observe the speedy ending that has often come to nations that seemed very grand, but whose grandeur was based upon despotic administration at the centre. Let it notice how rapidly Persian, Median, Assyrian, Byzantine, Turkish, Mexican, Peruvian, Spanish, and other despotisms have crumbled away from any blow that has been well directed at the central figure, or from any decay or disease that has once manifested itself at the heart of government. The nation that wishes to live well and long, should never suffer any one family to be the sole depository of political power.

Again, it is certain that in all countries grievances will from time to time arise. In a constitutional government the remedy for the

grievance is a change of ministry: in a despotism, it is a change of dynasty.

I need scarcely mention the common arguments against despotism—that the despot may go mad (he often has been nearly mad), and that even if you have a good and sane despot, he may be succeeded by a bad one, or by a feeble child.

I might, with the aid of a learned person who is in our company, have given you some further account of what has been propounded about various systems of polity by certain great writers. We might thus have been enabled to discuss Aristotle's *Politics;* but, as all Aristotle's views were based upon a substratum of slavery, I think we should not have arrived at any fruitful result. We might also have considered the various Republics which have been imagined by thoughtful men, such as those of Plato, Sir Thomas More, and Lord Bacon. But, lacking reality, these amusing disquisitions are not likely to give us any sure insight. I prefer to bring before you a conclusion that I have arrived at from studying the polities of several nations that are very little known to the world. My conclusion is, that political

wisdom does not depend upon what we call civilization, but is the result of an instinct of freedom, belonging to certain races. I have no doubt that, calling in Dunsford's aid, I could show that such an instinct prevailed amongst the German tribes, whose manners and customs Tacitus so vividly and succinctly recals. But the nations that I shall bring forward are some of those which existed in America at the time of the Spanish Conquest. It has astonished me to find what political sagacity prevailed occasionally in those nations. In Guatemala, for instance, a practice similar to that which existed in the Roman Empire of having a Cæsar and an Augustus was adopted, and thus the succession to power of a man of experience was sought to be provided.* In

* 'The same principle prevailed when these kingdoms began to be more separated from one another, and was ultimately developed at Utatlan in a manner that will remind the learned reader of the practice of having a Cæsar and an Augustus at an early period of the Roman Empire. There were four persons designated to the royal authority. The first was the reigning monarch; the second was the reigning monarch's brother, who was called "the elected one;" the third was the reigning monarch's eldest son, who was called by a title which the Spaniards rendered "the Chief Captain" (el Capitan mayor); the fourth was the reigning monarch's eldest nephew, who was called "the Second Captain" (el Capitan minor). When the Monarch died,

Tlascala, the government was republican (Cortes compares it to Genoa and Venice), and was committed to four chiefs and a senate. The deliberations of the senate exercised the greatest weight in public affairs. But it is in the remarkable state of Araucana that a polity has been discovered, in which the most careful provision was made for freedom. The Araucans were not subject to a feudal levy, nor to any kind of personal service, except in time of war. They did not pay any tribute, and their chiefs were considered but as 'the first amongst equals.'* They had three orders of

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"the elected one" succeeded to the throne, as the King of the Romans succeeded the Emperor in Germany. The Chief Captain succeeded to his place; the Second Captain to that of the Chief Captain; and then the eldest and nearest member of the Royal family took the lowest place. Thus the object was always secured of having at the head of the Government a man of experience, and of some knowledge of public affairs. . . . .

'The principle, however, of not appointing a youth to power, was so strong in this province of Tuzulutlan, that afterwards, when the Spaniards came to have authority in that province, and wished to place a young man on the throne, he refused, on account of his want of experience, being desirous of following the ways of his ancestors.'—*The Spanish Conquest in America*, vol. iii. pp. 253, 254.

* I thought it right to ask for references as regards the statements which Milverton made about the Araucans; and I subjoin the extracts with which he furnished me. 'Los susodichos no estan como en el gobierno feudal, sujetos á la leva; ni á algun

chiefs;* and they had a Parliament in which every business of importance was discussed.† They were a very wise and valiant people, and I believe have never been conquered. I could give several other instances of well-planned forms of government existing in these aboriginal nations.‡ I have, however, brought for-

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genero de servicio personal, sino es en tiempo de guerra. Tampoco son obligados á pagar tributo a sus Señores, los quales deben sustensarse de sus propios bienes. Bien que los respetan como á sus superiores, ó mas bien como á los primeros entre sus iguales; en lo demas se atienen a sus decisiones, y los escoltan quando van fuera del estado.'—MOLINA, *Historia de Chile*, vol. ii. p. 63.

* Tres ordines de Representantes, subordinados los unos a los otros, forman esta especie de República, esto es, los Toquis, los Apo-Ulmenes, y los Ulmenes, y todos ellos tienen sus respectivos vasallos.—MOLINA, *Hist. de Chile*, vol. ii. p. 60.

† Los Toquis no tienen mas que la sombra de la soberania. La triple-potencia que la constituye, reside en el cuerpo entero de los Varones, los quales, tratandose de qualesquier negocio de importancia, lo deciden al uso de los pueblos ordinarios de la Germania, en una Dieta general, que se llama Butacoyag, ó Aneacoyag, esto es, el Gran Consejo, ó el Consejo de los Araucanos.—MOLINA, *Hist. de Chile*, vol. ii. p. 62. Madrid, 1795.

‡ It is a very curious thing to notice that in these aboriginal American states the tendency was to place the highest power in the hands of four persons. They inclined to Tetrarchies rather than to Triumvirates. Now a Tetrarchy is more durable than a Triumvirate; and is less liable, I imagine, to merge into a despotism. If the Tetrarchs differ equally, so that two are divided against two, the Senate or the people have a chance of being called in to adjust this difference. If there is difference of opinion, or

ward sufficient to support my proposition,—that very judicious polities may exist at an early stage of civilization, if the instinct of the race is directed towards freedom. It is curious that the Araucans held a similar view of their good deities as of their chiefs: namely, that they were not to be propitiated by gifts and sacrifices. The Devil was to be propitiated, but not the good gods.

The practical result to be deduced from the above considerations is that the genius of the people must be closely thought upon, before we come to any conclusions as to what form of government it will be inclined to adopt and favour, when there is any chance for it of reconstructing a government; and we must expect that the movement towards freedom will always be slow amongst a people who have not a great love for personal liberty.

It has often been remarked how weak and inconclusive are the well known lines of Pope,

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of interest, in a Triumvirate, two of the Triumvirs oppress the third, and then contend for despotic power. Augustus and Antony make Lepidus a cypher; then Augustus conquers Antony; and despotism is established.

'For forms of government let fools contest,
That which is best administered is best.'

On the contrary there is some consolation in thinking that mal-administration is, in the long run, sure to put an end to those forms of government which are deeply injurious to the human race. The possession of political power presents itself to my mind under this strange image. I see a female figure bearing along a vase filled with liquid fire. If she moves steadily, however swiftly, the liquid fire remains in the vase; but if not, and the flames stream out of the vase, and fall upon the earth, they burn up all they touch, and follow on after the figure, until at last they spring upon her fluttering garments, and she soon sinks down consumed. From her ashes, rises, phœnix-like, another figure, generally quite different from the former one, in face, in form, in gesture. Meanwhile, the flames leap into the vase again; and the new figure bears on the sacred vessel, seemingly unconscious of, or unheeding, the fate of her predecessor.

You see at once how the figure that represents a government which has grown out of turbulence will be likely to have disordered

garments and a certain violence of movement and of gesture. She is soon consumed. You see other figures that spill the sacred fire from carelessness, from weakness, or from indifference to humanity. The result is happily the same in all cases. The injury done reacts upon the doer; and the miseries of mankind sooner or later find a sure avenger in the fearful liquid flames that may have destroyed their homes, their families, and all that they hold dear on earth, but which never cease to pursue the rash, feeble, or wicked figure that could not carry steadily along the celestial vase of power. And so, to my mind there is some consolation even when I contemplate the worst of governments, that of a despot, unrestrained by any mortal influences.

ELLESMERE. One hardly likes to break into conversation after such a long-sustained simile as Milverton has just treated us with. But I suppose somebody must do it, and I am the fittest person, as being the least respectful, and the least impressible by metaphors of any kind. Besides, I am going to delight the heart of Milverton. He has made a convert of me on two important points; and, if he does not love a convert, he is not the man I take him for.

DUNSFORD. Why you surely were not in favour of despotism before.

ELLESMERE. I do not know that. When people talk of liking despotisms, they always picture themselves to themselves as the despots. I see no harm therefore in a despotism in which Sir John Ellesmere is the despot; and I believe he would carry along the sacred vase in a most elegant and steady manner. Besides, he would take care to have no fluttering garments.

MR. MIDHURST. He would wear a kilt.

ELLESMERE. But, seriously speaking, Milverton has convinced me that we should be very tolerant when we comment upon early and rude attempts at constitutional government. Now I confess I was not tolerant. I attended the debates of the last French Assembly. I must tell you, by the way, how comical they were. An Orator would mount the Tribune, fire off a few provoking sentences, which hit the right or the left of the Chamber very severely; and then retire to the back of the Tribune, well knowing the clamour that would ensue. Forthwith the most violent words were exchanged between left and right. Clenched hands were held up menacingly; and in short there was a tumult. Then the President of the Assembly commenced playing a *fantasia* upon the bell, and after incredible efforts something like silence was restored. Now comes the drollest part of the affair. You might suppose that the Pre-

sident would be exhausted, and would be too glad to have a little quiet at any price. Not he. He took the opportunity of uttering some poignant, clever sentence, which gave mortal offence to the extreme right, or the extreme left. Great clamour again: then a fresh *fantasia* on the bell. Silence, however, was at last a second time restored. Then my friend the orator came forward with renewed vigour to the front of the Tribune, and recommenced his provoking speech.

But what clever fellows they were! I did not hear a man who was otherwise than a good speaker. Often I asked of some one sitting by, 'Who is this?' expecting to hear that he was famous. But it was a new member whom no one had heard of before. Ah, you should have heard Montalembert speak! It was like Follett's speaking.

But really when you consider the circumstances of the times, how excusable was all this intemperance. We speak under a settled government. No man amongst us in Parliament has the slightest notion that he may awake the next morning, to find that something political has happened, which shall make or mar his fortunes. There are no pretenders to the throne. There is no set of politicians in England of whom it can be justly said that they wish to upset all social order. Now I did not think enough of all this. I am very, very sorry that on several occasions I spoke too slightingly of that Assembly.

MILVERTON. Bravo, Ellesmere. It is quite refreshing to hear any man in these days own that he has been utterly in the wrong. It is the age of ineffectual explanations, whereas a man had often better confess at once 'I said this thing, I made this charge, but I was heated at the time, I was carried away by the necessity of ending a sentence vigorously, and I uttered words which are not justifiable.'

MR. MIDHURST. Really, men might do so, considering that even diplomatists say things sometimes which they are very sorry for. How well I remember an old *chef* of mine, who took snuff, he told me, upon principle, because it gave him time for thinking how he should answer. You know the elaborate business that an elderly gentleman can make of taking a pinch of snuff, and then, too, offering the box to the other diplomatist. As my *chef* was Ambassador at a very critical period for the peace of Europe, perhaps those pinches of snuff were worth hundreds of thousands of pounds to the nation.

ELLESMERE. I shall take snuff for the future.

MILDRED. You shall not. But what was the other thing, John, in which you agreed with my cousin? It is something rare to find you a convert to anybody's views.

ELLESMERE. Well, I think Milverton was right when he pointed out the difficulty which any private person, however great a lover of liberty, must have in resisting a despotism which he lives under. Again,

I must say I am sorry for having often said, 'These people, if they were worth anything, would not endure this or that government.' It is an unjust saying.

MILVERTON. It is. It would condemn ourselves. There have been periods when we, too, have endured for a considerable time governments of which we thoroughly disapproved. Do not you feel that if James the Second had not been so outrageously imprudent, we might have endured him for a long time? And, mark you, this habit of endurance, springing from a horror which all thoughtful Englishmen have of rashness in great affairs, is a large part of our strength.

But I will tell you how I was led to these considerations. You know how I like Spain and the Spaniards. Well, whenever I praised the nation, and told my friends what noble individuals I had observed amongst modern Spaniards, I was sure to be met with some rejoinder pointing out the badness of the government. I was thereupon led to see that a people might be unfortunate in their government —that even their virtues might conspire to aid bad government. Then, as regards resistance to despotism, I was made to consider the difficulty of that by a wise friend who was always showing me the extent of that difficulty, and 'putting the case,' for he was a lawyer, as to what a man could do under such circumstances. I soon saw that he had a wall built round him in every direction. Do not think that I am dis-

heartened by this. A time will come when such men can act. But it must be when a large public movement is imminent. One of the great results, however, of all thought upon this subject is that we should be very careful, both nationally and individually, not to foster the small beginnings of despotism, but to set our face against it from the first, and to maintain that discountenance.

DUNSFORD. I should think you were right, Milverton, in what you said about the bearing of despotism upon war; and if so, my aversion to despotism is greater than ever. Some little time ago I went to Woolwich in company with a party from our village——

ELLESMERE. ——and you found that Christianity had so far advanced that they were able to turn out two million of conical bullets in a week.

MR. MIDHURST. And quite right too. We must be prepared.

DUNSFORD. Ellesmere seems to divine my thoughts, for that was the very fact I was going to mention,—not, however, in the satirical way in which he mentioned it.

MILVERTON. I will tell you a curious calculation that I have made about war. It is of course a very rough calculation, but I have made out that an ordinary war in Europe, between two great powers (not a universal war like those of the days of the first Napoleon), costs about two hundred and fifty thou-

sand pounds a day. Think of that:—a million, every four days. I see in Ellesmere's eyebrows a movement of incredulity. Is it not so?

ELLESMERE. Well, one is always dubious about large figures.

MILVERTON. I assure you that, in order to be on the safe side, I have considerably under-rated what I believe to be the amount.

But I must tell you of a conversation which I had some little time ago with two of the most intelligent bankers in London on this subject. Would you like to hear some of the details of the waste which takes place in war? There may be one or two which occurred to us, and which you may not have thought of.

ELLESMERE. By all means. I delight in details.

MILVERTON. 1. Pay of unproductive labourers, being that of those soldiers who are added to the armies in consequence of the war.

2. Transport of material to places where it is not required by nature, and where there is no preparation for the transport.

Let us consider this matter a little. A town grows up gradually; and gradually many ways of approach to it are formed, those ways having reference to the position of the town and the nature of the surrounding country that feeds that town, so that ultimately the least possible labour is employed for the conveyance of goods and provisions. We wonder sometimes

how London is supplied from day to day. We little think of the labour, intellectual and physical, which has been going on for eighteen hundred years and more to provide approaches to that town. Then look what happens in war, when you have suddenly to provide, by brute force, if I may use the expression, for the transport of food, forage, clothing and material of all kinds, for the use of hundreds of thousands of men and tens of thousands of animals, to some spot which wanted nothing of the kind before, and which is utterly unprepared to receive this material.

3. Waste and spoiling of material in the course of transport.

4. Destruction of clothing. Of course you will naturally observe that soldiers are men, and wherever they are, must be clothed; but the rapid destruction of this clothing is an incident peculiar to war.

5. Waste of iron and of other metals, also of workmanship, in ammunition. A single shell costs ten pounds.

6. Waste by destruction of the country occupied. Think what a mulberry tree is worth, and how soon it is cut down.

7. Now comes an item which you have probably not considered, or, if you have considered it, have not estimated sufficiently high—waste from the hoarding of capital. Directly war commences, hoarding commences too. It begins at a great distance from the

seat of war, and is intensified as it approaches to the seat of war. Do you suppose that anybody living at a distance of fifty or sixty miles from great armies engaged in war is inclined to lay out a single penny that he can possibly avoid laying out, however much it might be for his interest under other circumstances to do so? A man of ninety years of age, having amiable feelings for his grandchildren, may plant trees in times of peace. But the young proprietor, who, at the distance of fifty miles from the seat of war, fancies on still evenings that he hears cannonading, plants nothing, and cuts down his green crops, to secure something.

8. Waste, in consequence of the death, mutilation, or destitution of grown-up men having others dependent upon them, who become paupers thrown upon the state for support.

9. Pensions and gratuities for disabled soldiers and for the families of those who fall in war.

Even a small skirmish creates annuitants. Their annuities are to be added up and calculated as part of the money loss which took place on the day of the skirmish.

10. Destruction of valuable animal life. Thirty thousand horses at twenty pounds a horse comes to a good deal of money.

11. Destruction of public works—such as roads, bridges, railroads, &c. I am told that, many years after war had ceased in France, the tracks of armies might

be seen in the demolition of roads which probably have never since been thoroughly reconstructed.

12. Destruction of the means of transport. Ships of transport are, comparatively speaking, but little injured; but, when you come to land transport, the daily loss is immense. The largest fortune in England would find itself reduced to a pittance, if it had to pay for the wheels that are destroyed in a considerable campaign.

13. Loss from the death of trained soldiers, each of whom represents a small portion of invested capital.

14. Waste and loss in re-transport, after the war is ended. Observe in daily life how careless most people are in bringing back anything that has not been wanted.

Now, I do not pretend that this is a scientific discussion of the subject. It is merely what occurred to three busy men talking in a bank parlour for a quarter of an hour. But it is really desirable that some man, who has a genius for statistics, should study some one war, and describe to us in detail the waste of it. There is nothing so ingeniously wasteful as war. The utmost skill is devoted to work of all kinds, which has only a momentary profit. You devote millions to earth-works, which are ever afterwards to be only an encumbrance to agriculture. You put metal into many shapes and forms, which are soon to be superseded, and the metal to be broken up. The waste of provisions is almost incalculable.

I should be very glad to have as a fortune the hay that is lost in the hedges as the waggons heavily brush past them during the hay-season in peaceful England. Think what must be the loss and damage of such a bulky thing as hay in its transport for warlike purposes.

In bringing all this before you, I know I am not saying anything new; but we are apt to forget these details; and surely they should be present to our minds at any time when war is imminent. I am not a Quaker. I do not say there is no such thing as a necessary war; but I say, let us keep a steady eye upon the cost of war, as a branch of the subject well worth thinking of. And I repeat that my computation of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds a day is a very moderate one.

MR. MIDHURST. Talking of war, it is an excellent thing, however commonplace it may be, to concentrate the mind on individual cases of suffering. We all know the masterly way in which Sterne brought home to us the miseries of captivity by dwelling tenderly upon the fate of a single captive. Now, the other day, I was travelling on a railroad with a number of people; and there was one poor creature, a sailor, who had met with a deplorable accident, and was making his way by this railroad to a hospital. It was touching to see the sympathy that was felt for this one poor man by all the passengers—how anxiously and tenderly the women inquired after

him; how, with a certain awkwardness and timidity, and with an endeavour to screen themselves from observation, those who could afford to do so, went and pressed money into the poor man's hands; and how kindly all the official persons took care of him. It was one of those accidents which would be thought nothing of in war, and after meeting with which a man would have to go on fighting. I could not help thinking what all these tender-hearted people would feel if they could see one battle-field on the next morning after a battle which they read of perhaps with tolerable complacency, hearing that there were only two thousand killed and about three thousand wounded. Follow to the hospital, in imagination, only one of those three thousand wounded, and you will not be in a hurry again to provoke a war.

DUNSFORD. The same idea occurred to me the other day when I was looking at a book called *The Military Events in Italy in* 1848-9. I had borne with great composure the account of battles and sieges in which there were many killed and many wounded, but at the end a single sentence impressed me more with the dread realities of war than all that I had looked at before. The sentence was this. 'In the batteries before Malghèra 200 Austrian artillerymen met their death, many on the spot, some after severe surgical operations.' * Those three last words

* Translated from the German by the Earl of Ellesmere. London: John Murray, Albemarle-street, 1851.

'severe surgical operations' brought back to my mind a humanity which had been rather dormant while I had been reading of active and clever movements and great operations in the campaign.

MILVERTON. No man's imagination is sufficiently active in picturing to him the miseries of others, especially when those 'others' are very numerous. But we wander from the subject. I am going to say something now which might appear to be in favour of despots as regards war.

Amongst an assemblage of men responsibility is apt to be divided and frittered away. But when a great responsibility, like that of commencing a war, falls upon one man, we may well wonder how he ever musters up the courage to take it. For our private sins we run into danger of our 'eternal jewel,' as Shakespeare says, being 'given to the common enemy of man.' But how any one makes up his mind to such a fearful risk for public ends (he generally tells you they are public ends), mostly of a very doubtful nature, passes my comprehension. Now gambling has no fascination for me. I do not wish to win other people's money, or to lose my own in that way. But still I can well imagine the fascination that it exercises, when such a man as Fox could say something like the following. 'The greatest pleasure is to win at cards, and the next pleasure is to lose.' But then you see in such a case there is habit, there is impulse. War, as I said before, is a deliberate affair, and when

the responsibility of commencing it falls upon one or two men, you would imagine that they would not have the courage to undertake it, having some thought for their welfare in another world. Still, all experience is against one in this point. Doubtless dynastic considerations are the fatal things that prevail in monarchs' minds. Even Hobbes, in his *Leviathan*, owns that though the monarch be careful in 'his political person' to procure the common good, yet he is still more careful to procure the private good of himself and his family; and, if these are inconsistent, he prefers the private, for, as Hobbes adds, 'the passions of men are apt to prevail over their reason.' I do not remember the passage accurately, but that is the sense of it. But then Hobbes proceeds to say, a monarch is great only as his subjects are great, consequently his private interest coincides with the public interest. A more utterly fallacious argument than that it is difficult to conceive!

ELLESMERE. I am very glad that you have mentioned Hobbes; I meant to have asked you whether you had given due weight to his writings on this subject.

MILVERTON. I have studied carefully his great chapter 'On the several Kinds of Commonwealth,' and it appears to me anything but profound; admirably expressed, but not borne out by common sense, or common experience—the writing of a man who knows books better than men.

MR. MIDHURST. I wish Milverton you could give us an account of the chapter: it would be very amusing.

MILVERTON. I will try; but it is almost a shame to do so, for his style is admirable, and to do him justice his own words ought to be used.

He speaks of the advantage which absolute monarchs have in the choice of counsellors, also in the length of time before action which they can use for taking counsel about it, and in the secresy of their counsels. And then, turning to the other side, he points out that the counsellors to assemblages of men are, for the most part, those who have been 'versed in the acquisition of wealth rather than of knowledge.' This, I must admit, is a wonderful hit against modern Parliaments. Then he adds another pregnant remark: namely, that these counsellors will give their advice in long speeches which may excite men to action, but will not govern them when in it.

He says that the resolves of a monarch are subject to no inconstancy but that of human nature (one would think that that was enough); but that in assemblies one thing is ruled to-day, and another to-morrow.

Then he remarks that a monarch cannot disagree with himself, but that the jealousies and private interests of assemblies may be full of civil discord.

Then he admits that the favourites of monarchs

may do harm, but contends that the favourites of public assemblies, orators, may do more.

After all, his great argument is that in monarchy the private interest of the monarch is the same with the interest of the nation. Now we know what a fallacy this is. These interests may be opposed; and then, again, even if the abstract proposition were true, that the private interest of the monarch always corresponded with the interest of the people, how are we to be sure that he will have the wisdom to discern this interest? How seldom he has done so! The way to answer these doctrinaires is to turn to facts. Almost every page of history contradicts their assertions.

MR. MIDHURST. I must recal you to what you said about the aggressiveness of despotisms. I was not satisfied with your statement. Surely it requires many modifications.

MILVERTON. I know it does. The character of the people ruled over by the despot varies the question immensely. A vain people is always aggressive. A vain man can always be induced to undertake any feat, which others, perhaps, would shrink from. If we had a vain man amongst us now, we could easily tempt him to vault over the back of this seat, especially if we pretended to believe that he could not do it. Whereas, a more solid fellow might say, 'I dare say I could do it, but I do not care to distinguish myself in that way.' I only contend that a

despot will play more easily upon the vanity of such a nation than a government can, which has many checks in it, where there is much opportunity for discussion, and where the vanity of the nation may be divided and made to act in different directions, counteracting perhaps each other.

ELLESMERE. You may say that despotisms are aggressive; but you must own that free states are especially provocative. Consider what a perpetual provocation to war a free press gives. I believe that almost everybody feels the attacks in newspapers more than he pretends to feel them. You may say what you like, but it is a very ugly thing to be attacked in a publication which has innumerable readers, and which, from its ephemeral existence, cannot well be attacked again. Few persons are sufficiently masters of themselves to maintain a perfectly smooth temper on the days when they are so attacked. And, strange to say, large bodies of men seem almost as sensitive to attack as individuals are. A nation, not accustomed to a free press, can be driven into fury by the published comments of a neighbouring nation.

MR. MIDHURST. What Sir John says is very true. In my diplomatic career I have had opportunities of observing how keenly very exalted personages in foreign countries feel about some article in an English newspaper, which we should think nothing of.

MILVERTON. I cannot help that. I am very sorry

for it. But, of course, we cannot give up the habit of free speaking and free writing to please or conciliate anybody. I will admit that great discretion should be used when we are speaking or writing of foreigners; but this discretion must mainly be left to the individuals who speak or write. When a difference has arisen between two free nations, such as the Americans and ourselves, very unpleasant things are said and written, especially at first, on both sides. Then there comes a wiser and calmer discussion, both in newspapers and in public assemblages. The violence and the rancour are disowned; and, somehow or other, without gagging our press or theirs, the disputes between the two nations have been very reasonably adjusted for many years. Admitting to the full the provocativeness inherent in a free press, I contend that the chief cure is to be found in the general extension of freedom of discussion throughout the world.

ELLESMERE. Now, to turn to another part of the subject, you maintained somewhere or other that a mob was easier to deal with than a despot.

MILVERTON. I fully abide by what I said; and I maintain that, unless the mob be a hired one, you can, with perseverance, get it to listen to nearly anything. It secretly likes a man who will stand up against it. It knows full well that no man wishes to thwart it; that every orator loves cheers and not hisses: and when a man does utter unpleasant

things in presence of a mob, every soul in the crowd is aware that the poor man is doing something which is against the grain, but which he feels to be a duty. It soon begins to sympathize with him a little, and generously inclines to give the full weight to arguments which are uttered in direct contradiction to its own prepossessions. What an assemblage of men cannot abide is anything like trimming or shuffling. All men delight in clearness of thought and distinctness of expression. An orator who is subtle or hazy had better not address a mob.

ELLESMERE. I think Milverton has made a very good defence for his dear mob. Now, turn to another point which he just touched upon, but did not follow out. He mentioned Charles the Fifth and his government, which, though despotic in form, was evidently, according to Milverton, tempered by something which made it tolerable in his eyes. I want to hear more from him on that subject. That is the advantage of these conversations. One is able to probe a man a little.

MILVERTON. Well, then, there was a freedom of access to men in power in those times which there is not in ours, and which tended to mitigate despotism. This freedom of access is prevented now by the complications of civilization, which naturally lead to multiplicity of business. It is very hard now, even in the freest governments, for private persons (whatever good thing they may have to say) to obtain the

means of saying it to men in power. They are obliged to have recourse to the press; and, in a despotic government, cannot obtain any hearing at all. But a simple monk could soon find his way to Charles the Fifth's presence. There were always plenty of people to tell Charles the Fifth what they thought of his sayings or doings. He had his Ellesmeres about him——

BLANCHE. Poor man!

MILVERTON——who did not fail to tell him all they thought, in language far from circumspect. I spoke of Titian's position towards the Monarch. Nobody could doubt that the position was full of freedom, who had once seen Titian's great picture of Charles the Fifth on horseback. It is the grandest picture of the kind I have ever beheld. Not one iota of flattery is there in it. There are the falling jaw, the complexion full of disease, the scanty beard and worn countenance; yet withal you see that the Monarch is a great, valiant, cautious, melancholy, commanding man. It is a ghastly grand picture. It could only have been made by a free man, living, it may be, in a Court, but addressing courtiers who were accustomed to see, and to tell, the truth, and who did not wish their master to be painted other than he was. Such a picture could not be made by the Court painter of a despotic monarch, whose despotism was built upon democracy. The common people would not endure it.

ELLESMERE. I will go to Madrid in my next long vacation. I never find, though, that any picture comes up to what you enthusiasts say about it.

DUNSFORD. I expected to hear Milverton descant upon the social evils attending upon despotism. I have always believed that luxury and extravagance flourish under despotic governments:—that 'plain living and high thinking' are no more.

MILVERTON. I think so too. But I am afraid of exaggeration upon these points. I can imagine a despot of plain tastes and simple habits, who should foster such tastes and habits amongst his people. I think there have been such despots. They have generally, I suppose, been warriors. But I suspect that the tendency of despotism is to foster luxury.

ELLESMERE. If so, I suppose it is because people under such a government have fewer ways of amusing themselves.

MR. MIDHURST. Well, then, as to religion, Milverton?

MILVERTON. Sometimes despotism favours religion; sometimes it does not. One of the worst things about despotism is that it is so full of chance, and that it interrupts the natural current of thought and action.

I am now going to say something which Ellesmere will declare to be hazy, but which to me represents despotism in its most alarming colours. It is, that the nature of despotic power is thoroughly misun-

derstood both by the despot himself and by all who contemplate him. I can best make clear to you what I mean by a quotation from Goethe's *Faust.* It is one of those passages written by a man of genius, of which, I suspect, the man of genius himself did not perceive the full depth of meaning, and the extent of all its consequences. It occurs when Mephistopheles is tempting Faust. Faust had been saying that it was in vain he tried to assume the universal feelings of mankind—that he must end at last,

'Feeling within myself no added powers,
Not by one hair's breadth higher than before,—
As far as ever from the eternal nature!'

Then Mephistopheles replies,

'You view the thing, good sir, as men view things:
This must be made more clear, or we shall lose
Life's pleasures—what, the vengeance—hands and feet,
And head and heart, are thine, confessedly.
But are the things which I command, enjoy,
And use at will, the less to be called mine?
When I behold six horses at my service,
Is not their strength, and speed, and vigour, mine?
I move as rapidly, and feel in truth,
As if their four-and-twenty limbs were mine.'*

Now in that remarkable passage there is to be found the great delusion which besets men in despotic power, and those who regard them. It is very well for Mephistopheles to say that we possess that which

* ANSTER'S *Faust*, p. 112.

we use; but if we do not know how to use it, we do not, in the highest sense, possess it. It is true that the despot does drive these six horses; but the question is, whether his nature is of that power that it should drive those six horses; whether it possesses the insight that might instruct him where to drive those horses to, or whether he is merely slashing and hurrying about, making a great noise and dust, and doing less or worse than nothing. The crowd looks on; and it is charmed with all the noise, the prancing, and the curveting. Even the sober and retired bystander is much imposed upon by all this pomp and seeming power. But mostly it comes to naught, and the delusion is broken up amidst the execrations of mankind, who find out at last that what a man pays for and drives, he may not be able in any right way to govern or direct.

Here Milverton rose, the discussion was broken up, and we walked away. As we went home, Ellesmere remarked to me, how skilful it was in Milverton to end where he did. 'He was resolved to wind up with a crash, and not to give me any opportunity for weakening by comment the force of his last metaphor. He was right too. We are all deluded by the outward trappings and barbaric noise of despotism.'

CHAPTER XI.

THE FARM-YARD.

A COURTSHIP is a very interesting process to the persons principally concerned. It is also very amusing to the philosophic bystander. That flowery period spent in courtship is perhaps the only time in his life when a very shrewd man is often an utter dupe, and what is more, takes in himself about himself. Even Talleyrand probably deceived Talleyrand when he was courting, and imagined that he had a supreme disdain for all the pomps and vanities of the world. Thus I have heard Ellesmere speak, and now I have the advantage of seeing him in the position which he talked of. I myself think very differently about the matter from him, and believe that men and women then show forth all the highest possibilities of their nature, and have a tenderness and a tolerance for one other creature, and a power of abnega-

tion for themselves, which if continued into ordinary life, would go far to make this world a heaven—at any rate something very different from what it is.

I do not mean to say that our two pairs of lovers were exceedingly altered during their time of courtship; for, indeed, what could alter Ellesmere much? He remained the same brusque, comical, provoking, combative, affectionate kind of man that he ever was; but the affectionateness prevailed over all the other qualities, and in it, as in a golden girdle, were set all the bright peculiarities of his nature. The women were less changed than the men. Speaking once to Ellesmere on the subject, he said, 'You see they are always graceful impostors, and a little more or less of imposture is not much noticed in them.' The chief difference in Milverton was that he became less abstract in his views of men and things, and was more inclined to speak cheerfully of all that came under his notice.

We proceeded homewards to England by easy journeys, and our lovers were too much interested in each other to give much time or thought to sight seeing.

At length we were all at home again; and the conversation which I am now going to record took place in Milverton's farm-yard a few days after our arrival. Milverton has had some rustic seats made there, which enjoy the shade of a large sycamore. There we sat, while the master explained to us the merits and peculiarities of the different animals. He thus began.

MILVERTON. Foreign travel is all very well, but there is a good deal in it that is like going to see a Diorama. A wonderful picture is unrolled before you; but you do not touch, handle, understand, or get to the meaning of most of it. It is very well to see Paul Potters, but I prefer my own real live cows that I know something about. Do you observe this dear little Alderney? She is wishing to be noticed. She is wondering that she is not noticed, but is too delicate and high-bred to obtrude herself upon our attention. [Milverton then went up and fondled the cow, which for the greater part of this discussion remained close to us, ruminating sagaciously.] Now I want to show you that turkey. Turkeys do not bear a very high character for knowingness, or friendliness; but, as you see, this one is most familiar with the human race. She is also very gracious with other creatures; and it is one of the most comical sights to

notice how all stray creatures seem to be aware of her benevolent nature. Forlorn chickens, solitary or maimed ducklings, bewildered little guinea-fowls, all find refuge with her, even when she has a brood of her own to take care of. They absolutely roost upon her while her own progeny is nestling under her. She is the Miss Nightingale of the farm-yard, or would be if Miss Nightingale were married, which I suppose would not check her sheltering benevolence of nature. The two things that one learns down here are great faith in the force of race, and withal a firm belief in the individuality of creatures. That last is the main thing. When we see how different each of these inferior creatures is from all the rest, we may form some little notion how different each one of us is from all the rest, though we pretend to be alike, and try to be alike, and make believe, even to ourselves, that we are alike. Trace up all intolerance and it comes mainly to this—that the intolerant person believes that other people are just like himself, or if not, that he must have them made so. They must be immediately cast into his mould, or he will know the reason why.

Then as to race: do you see that curiously speckled hen? She is of a very peculiar character, most tender to her own offspring, most malignant to the offspring of all other feathered creatures. So was her mother before her, and so I suspect will be one of her little ones that is exactly like her now. My man is always

urging me to get rid of the whole breed, to which I invariably reply, 'Not till Mr. Buckle has seen them.' He imagines Mr. Buckle to be a great poultry-fancier; but I allude to the ingenious, bold, and learned author of the *History of Civilization*, who, in my judgment, makes too little of the effect of race; and I shall not be satisfied until I have had a long talk with him in this spot, and with the aid of John, have illustrated my view of the subject, by commenting upon the nature of the cows, pigs, hens, and ducks, of this farm-yard. [Here John came and whispered something to his master.] No, John, this is Mr. Midhurst, and not the great poultry-fancier whom you are anxious to see.

ELLESMERE. Forgive me for interrupting you, Milverton; but what is that diabolic noise I hear? It is not in the farm-yard, but it comes from a few fields off.

MILVERTON. Oh that is 'Puffing Billy,' for so we rustics hereabouts name the steam-threshing machine. It is an odious noise. All my household declare that it gives them headaches; and, as for me, who hate all noises, even the twittering of birds, you can imagine what objurgations, not couched in the most mild or repeatable language, I have uttered against that obstreperous monster. But I have something very remarkable to tell you about it, an acoustical problem, which only Professor Willis, or some other great *savant*, will be able to solve. I have certainly observed

that when 'Puffing Billy' is threshing my own corn, the noise appears quite different from what it does at other times, and I am not nearly so much relieved when 'Puffing Billy' leaves off, and takes his departure. This of course must arise from some difference in the corn. I shall put the point to the Professor, if I get an opportunity, when I go next to Cambridge.

But there are many things that one learns from living in the country. You know what a dislike I have to much walking, and that to take a 'constitutional' appears to me one of the most vague, foolish, and disagreeable operations possible. Now I have observed that I can always walk further to the East than to the West, starting from my study door. Of course there may be very grand reasons for this. Nations move westward; but the tendency of individuals, perhaps, is to move eastward: or shall we say that this particular individual, from a certain melancholy in his nature, is always willing to avoid the declining aspect of the day, and turns for ever to the east for renewed hope and consolation? That ill-natured Ellesmere, who takes the lowest, or, as he calls it, the most practical view of everything, will be sure to remark that my few fields lie towards the east, and that I can walk well enough in them, though I am overcome by instant fatigue in other people's ground. To which I reply, If not a rose, I have lived with roses: if not a philosopher, I have

lived with philosophers, such as Ellesmere, Dunsford, and Midhurst, not to speak of Blanche and Mildred; and is it likely that such trumpery influences, as those of property, should subdue a man who has spent so much time in such great company?

ELLESMERE. Of all humbugs, the philosopher is not the least.

DUNSFORD. How prettily it was said some time ago in an article on Country Houses in *Fraser's Magazine*, 'The enjoyment of all things beyond eating and drinking arises out of our idealizing them. Do you think that a child who will spend an hour delightedly in galloping round the garden on his horse, which horse is a stick, regards that stick as the mere bit of wood? No: that stick is to him instinct with imaginings of a pony's pattering feet and shaggy mane, and erect little ears. It is not so long since the writer was accustomed to ride on horseback in that inexpensive fashion, but what he can remember all that the stick was; and remember too how sometimes fancy would flag, the idealizing power would break down, and from being a horse the stick became merely a stick, a dull, wearisome, stupid thing.'*

ELLESMERE. It is very pretty, but I do not see how it applies.

DUNSFORD. Why I was thinking of the ideal value which each man has for what belongs to him.

* *Fraser's Magazine*, p. 696. Dec. 1858.

MILVERTON. I knew an old lady who really believed that her money was worth more than other people's money; and, if she gave five pounds to any of her nephews or nieces, she always considered that it was equal to six pounds ten shillings at least of ordinary people's money. Her pounds, which she had saved with great care, were not common pounds; and she thought they would go farther. Most of us are a little like the old lady.

MR. MIDHURST. I know you all think me a gloomy man, but I must venture to tell you that the aspect of all these animals only impresses me——

ELLESMERE. Now he is going to say something about eating.

MR. MIDHURST. No, he is not——only impresses me with a sense of the pain, weariness, and travail, of all created things. Here are creatures, many of them, according to the philosophic Milverton, with exquisite natures; and what does it all come to? A good deal of distress while they are alive, and negation, according to our theories, when they are dead. Now look at that creature's eye. It has the painful anxious appearance of that of a sick man.

MILVERTON. You are right. That creature is suffering from something the matter with its teeth. It is getting better though.

MR. MIDHURST. I shall never forget how much I was impressed at hearing that horses suffer from that torturing disease, the stone. To be sure men

are more profoundly, consistently, ludicrously miserable than any other animals; but then——

MILVERTON. You know the saying of Pascal, Mr. Midhurst,—that if man is miserable, at least he is great in knowing that he *is* miserable. I remember some of his words, '*Ainsi toutes ses misères prouvent sa grandeur. Ce sont misères de grand seigneur.*'

MR. MIDHURST. Oh, if you come to Pascal, there indeed I have an ally. Does he not say, that we never enjoy the present, because we are always thinking of the future, or the past?

ELLESMERE. What of that? Somehow a man gets enjoyment. The faces of men give us a truer insight into what passes in their minds than all the maxims of all the philosophers in the world. On those faces, though there are lines of chagrin and furrows of anxiety, there are also pleasant curves and marks and dimples which show that thousands of agreeable emotions have passed through their minds. Even in the grave Milverton's face I can discern that he has been laughing half his time—secretly of course—at his own follies and those of the rest of the world. It is very little discomfort to me to have it proved to me, that I am always thinking of the past or of the future, if somehow or other I contrive to get a great deal of satisfaction and pleasure out of my thoughts.

MR. MIDHURST. Ah, do you recollect that grand

passage in Pascal, where he compares us all to a set of slaves in chains, condemned to death, who see a certain number of their comrades killed before their eyes each day, and who, looking at each other, without any hope, in misery await their turn of destruction?

MILVERTON. The same idea has been much better expressed elsewhere.

ELLESMERE. Mr. Midhurst and his gloomy friend Pascal are getting the unkindest treatment from us to-day.

MILVERTON. I cannot recollect the author, or the exact passage; but some man has compared the condition of men to that of a set of dancers (not galley-slaves, you will observe); and, every now and then, as they go on dancing, some disappear through the flooring; but still the dance goes on.

There is also in *Don Quixote* a very apt comparison found for the condition of human life by Sancho Panza. Don Quixote, in his noble language, had been telling Sancho how like human life is to a play. One takes the part of a ruffian, another of a liar, a third of a merchant, a fourth of a soldier. This man is for the occasion the lover: that man is the judicious friend. At last the play is ended. Each takes off the clothes which belong to his part, and the players remain equal. So it is in the comedy of this world, says Don Quixote. There are emperors and popes, and all the characters that can be intro-

duced into a play; but when it is played out, death takes away the outward trappings which made them seem to differ, and they remain equal in the tomb. 'An excellent comparison,' said Sancho, 'although not so new that I have not heard it many and different times, as likewise that comparison of life to a game of chess,—that while the game lasts, each piece has its particular office; and, when the game is finished, all the pieces are mingled and huddled and shuffled together; and they put them into a bag, which is like the ending of life in the grave."*

ELLESMERE. All these similes are very unsatisfactory things, but those that Milverton has brought forward are less unlike the truth than that of Pascal; and as for Sancho Panza's, it is the best of the whole lot. None of them come up to Shakespeare's.

'It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.'

How, in the old-times of coaching, one has been encountered, on a change of horses, by the village idiot, with large tongue obstreperously telling one something of which one could not make out a single

* Brava comparacion! dixo Sancho, aunque no tan nueva, que yo no la haya oido muchas y diversas veces, como aquella del juego del axedrez, que mientras dura el juego cada pieza tiene su particular oficio, y en acabándose el juego, todas se mezclan, juntan y baraxan, y dan con ellas en una bolsa, que es como dar con la vida en la sepultura.—*Don Quixote*, parte segunda, l. v. c. 12.

word; one supposed it must mean begging, gave him something, and got into the coach again, not the merrier for having seen him. But his story was our own life.

MR. MIDHURST. Lamennais, in his *Paroles d'un Croyant*, gives a fine image of what man is like, as long as he is in the flesh. '*Sous cette enveloppe épaisse du corps, vous ressemblez à un voyageur qui, la nuit dans sa tente, voit ou croit voir des fantômes passer.*'

ELLESMERE. Grand but vague.

MILVERTON. To me, in a strange inexplicable way, music serves to explain everything. They say there is nothing so unlike real life as an Italian opera; but I find in it the very image and semblance of life. Now a grand recitative: now the wailing, or the joyous shouting, of a chorus. Prominently forward on the scene come the passions. They may be ever so tragic, ever so lugubrious, ever so sordid; but the terror and the grief and the sordidness are enwrapt in divine harmonies; and it is in vain that you make the story ever so miserable, the beauty of the music perpetually conquers it, and disdains to be held in the mean bonds of an ignoble affliction. So, in contemplating the Universe, when we see the exact obedience to number and to weight, and the exquisite co-ordination of forces, according to which all things move, it partly soothes, partly submerges, all present, all individual suffering; and the sense of power, of

power so great that you feel it must be beneficent, enfolds you in a supernatural security, leaving no room, while this music of order is resounding in your ears, for untrusting sorrow, or mean grief, to enter. This is what the ancients fabled, and what laborious modern research for ever continues to unfold—the true music of the spheres.

MR. MIDHURST. You talk very gorgeously and very glibly, Milverton, about the harmony of creation, and about everything proceeding according to number and to weight; but it is the very definiteness of this number and weight, and the very rigidity of the laws of the universe which occasionally impress me with the gloomiest thoughts.

Now I will take an instance of what I mean—a very humble instance—which has just occurred to me, while glancing over your farm-yard.

A beautiful thing is the incubative, the pre-maternal instinct. That duck which is now waddling along so ungracefully towards the pond, is an admirable incubator, we will suppose. She has eleven eggs put under her. Who shall tell the labours, anxieties, troubles, and sufferings which that poor creature undergoes during the five weeks of incubation? She starves herself, she neglects to waddle down to that dirty pond so dear to her. Her feathers come off, and she is bare to the skin at the part where she is with difficulty covering all the eggs (you see, Milverton, I have watched the ways of farm-yard

creatures as well as you); but, unfortunately, in this case that I am imagining, ten out of the eleven eggs that she is sitting upon are addled, and what is more were addled from the first. The law of their addlement proceeds with adamantine rigour. The law again upon which her incubative instinct proceeds is not a whit abated on account of the infelicitous termination which is sure to consummate her labours.

Now, in my foolish, ignorant way, I could not but wish a little relaxation of the law in this case.

To proceed with the history of my unfortunate duck. At the end of the five weeks one duckling is produced, which is immediately taken away from the poor mother, and added to a large and vigorous brood.

ELLESMERE. Good Heavens, how like it is to human life! Most of us begin by sitting diligently upon ten or eleven great schemes of life, the greater part of which are inevitably addled from the first moment of incubation. A man means to be great, powerful, rich, to bring plenty to his home, joy to his parents, and amongst other things to be a signal benefactor to mankind. He also condescends to have two or three other projects, not very large ones; such as to dance well, to play at cricket tolerably, or to ascertain how to brew small beer. He does not succeed in the greater projects. He does not become powerful, or rich, or bring plenty to his home, or singular joy to his parents. These were addled schemes from the first; but perhaps the one egg does turn out rightly,

and he dances pretty well, as I do, or plays at cricket judiciously, as Walter and I play,—or, after much toil, he does succeed in brewing small beer tolerably.

MILVERTON. Am I to answer all this gravely? Do you really want, Mr. Midhurst, to have perpetual disturbance of the laws of nature?

DUNSFORD. At any rate this is one of the beautiful considerations connected with miracles, that they furnish to devout men the conviction that the rigidity of the laws of nature may be broken for high purposes.

MR. MIDHURST. It is no good continuing the controversy. It is all a question of temperament. Men of sanguine temperament can see, or rather feel, these things as you do, Milverton; but I fail to perceive them in any such joyous or resigned fashion.

ELLESMERE. As for my part, I am willing to believe in this music of the spheres that Milverton speaks so loftily about; but I would always rather hear him condescend to lower topics, such as drainage, or whitewashing; or that he would give us an account, which he could do with just as much eloquence, of the probable rise or fall in prices, and of how one might invest one's money to the best advantage. [Here he laid his hand upon Mildred, who gave it, I believe, a sharp pinch.] Do not be so severely conjugal, Mildred; I am not your slave yet. Oh, of course, any fine talk about the music of the spheres, and about everything being all right, and harmony prevailing over disorder, always carries away women.

BLANCHE. I am sure all that Leonard says is quite right. I have felt it myself, only I have not been able to say so.

ELLESMERE. Oh then, undoubtedly, it must be true. Dunsford is on that side, too, I can see.

DUNSFORD. Yes, Ellesmere, an assured hope, beyond all power of defining or even of expressing, prevails in my mind over all other considerations; and I am not to be persuaded (even if obliged to content myself with the low grounds of natural religion) that man is the poor uncared-for creature that you, from your love of opposition, Mr. Midhurst, from his persevering love of what is dismal, and Pascal, from his melancholy, would persuade us. Besides, if I recollect rightly, the said Pascal remarks, how dangerous it is to make a man see his resemblance to the beasts that perish without showing him at the same time his especial grandeur.*

MILVERTON. I am not in the least daunted or discomposed by Ellesmere's ridicule. Indeed he generally begins by ridiculing that which he secretly believes. Even in contemplating this world's affairs, I think we have every ground for hopefulness. I believe that a feeling of pity is rising slowly in the

* 'Il est dangereux de trop faire voir à l'homme combien il est égal aux bêtes, sans lui montrer sa grandeur. Il est encore dangereux de lui faire trop voir sa grandeur sans sa bassesse. Il est encore plus dangereux de lui laisser ignorer l'un et l'autre. Mais il est très avantageux de lui représenter l'un et l'autre.'

heart of man as the dew upon Mount Hermon, to which the Psalmist likens the happy state of those brethren who 'dwell together in unity,'—a pity compared with which all that mankind has yet known of pity will seem hardness of heart; that will take the deepest heed of all the difficulties which the more obscure part of the human race has hitherto had to encounter; that will permeate society from the highest to the lowest; that will never rest until it finds some cure for whatever can be cured in human affairs; that will bury in oblivion what should be buried in oblivion; that will try to render all occupations tolerable and to some extent beautiful; and that will make universal brotherhood something more than a name. To expect that great results of this kind will come without signal and most alarming interruptions, and without most perplexing drawbacks, would be Utopian. A tidal movement of the kind I mean is not easily to be perceived in any one generation; but still I think some intimations of its commencement are perceptible in ours.

MR. MIDHURST. Has freedom then advanced of late? A little time ago you had something to say against despotism.

ELLESMERE. Has slavery been quelled of late?

MILVERTON. I will answer your question first, Ellesmere. There may be some ugly difficulties at present in the way of anti-slavery. But now, con-

sider. You are a man in the prime of life. When you were a youth, our great experiment of freeing our own slaves was commenced. I contend that that immense experiment has been signally successful.

ELLESMERE. For whom?

MILVERTON. For the slaves themselves, and also for the world in general. If, instead of talking at random about this matter, you would carefully go into details, you will find that for the most part my words are amply borne out—that the evils which were liberally prophesied have not come to pass; that the West India Islands have not fallen into barbarism; that the negro population has not been diminished; that Europe has not been deprived of West India products; and that, in short, an experiment, which no statesman could have imagined to be without considerable hazard, has proved not merely innocuous, but extensively beneficial to the world.

Now, to answer Mr. Midhurst. Have you ever considered, Mr. Midhurst, what a large thing freedom is? It is not a very easy transaction to set a bird free judiciously—Blanche's Canary-bird, for instance; and some preparation is necessary before you can turn a horse out to pasture that has been months in the stable. I admit that there is some retrogression as regards freedom in certain nations of Europe. In others, mark you, there is manifest advance—in

Russia, Prussia, and Sardinia,* for example. But even in other nations retrogression is more apparent than real; and what there is of it that is real, may be compared to one of those backward movements of the tide which precede the great advance of a bounding wave upon the shore. Every age is full of fright at its own peculiar disasters, of disgust at its own peculiar short-comings, of sad apprehensions for the future of the human race. The historian is accustomed to these things. In any age, however, there are but few historians; and they cannot do much to comfort and reassure the world. But if you will ask any man who has taken a large survey of present human affairs and of past history, whether he sees any just cause for apprehension with regard to human liberty taken generally, I think, unless he be a man of a very gloomy and desponding nature, that he will unhesitatingly answer, No.

ELLESMERE. The men who write big books of history are so intent upon oppressing mankind in their own way, that they do not take notice of the progress of other despotisms; and indeed their own is so great that all others dwindle into smallness when compared with it.

MILVERTON. You are driven into jesting, Ellesmere; and you see that you have no other way of

* I do not know what Milverton would say now; but I think he would probably abide by what he said on this occasion.

appearing to answer me, for you must feel with me that the contemplation of what has been done during the last fifty years leaves little ground for regret, repining, or despondency.

Milverton rose from his seat; we followed him: and there was no more talk except about trivial things, while we remained in the farm-yard.

CHAPTER XII.

CHIEFLY SHOWING THE NEED FOR TOLERANCE.

AFTER we had visited the farm we went for a walk to the Downs; and, as the conversation there was I think very interesting, I have reserved it for a separate and final chapter. It began thus. We had been talking about riches, and Milverton took up the conversation in the following words.

MILVERTON. Of course it is a great thing that a state should be wealthy; but I think that, as individuals, we ought to do everything to resist the influence of riches.

ELLESMERE. What do you mean?

MILVERTON. We should resist their influence in political matters. We should resist their influence socially. We should resist their influence upon our individual selves. I remember a fine lady once saying to me: 'It is the fashion, Mr. Milverton, this year, to be poor.' I could not help thinking what an admirable fashion it would be. I must confess I

have always had a sort of regard for fashion, because it is one of those powers that may set itself up against the tyranny of riches or any other tyranny.

MR. MIDHURST. Very true. I believe that you might make it fashionable to break off many habits that lead to comfortless expense. Suppose it were fashionable now to be waited upon by women instead of by men, what an excellent saving there would be.

DUNSFORD. Anything that should induce men to look, not merely at the fact of worldly success, but at the means by which it has been acquired, and to estimate men more according to that, would be an immense gain to the world.

ELLESMERE. Quite Utopian, my dear friend! Do let us abide within the precincts of common sense and common feeling.

MILVERTON. I will tell you, Ellesmere, what is not Utopian, and that is, to effect such an improvement in the condition of the poor as to make men less anxious to avoid that condition by any means, whether righteous or unrighteous. That, in my opinion, should be the great object of a state.

ELLESMERE. You men of letters, being generally distressed, extravagant, thoughtless beings, have always much to say against the acquisition of riches.

MILVERTON. I have intended several times, Ellesmere, to answer you when you have been sneering against men of letters; and I will take this occasion of doing so. I shall begin by quoting to you a re-

mark of the present Lord Grey, which I have quoted before, but which cannot be too much impressed upon you. I happened to hear him make it in a speech in the House of Commons, when he was Lord Howick. The point in discussion was the fraudulent nature of a certain class of men. I think they were a class of merchants; but I have forgotten the particulars of the question that was before Parliament. The substance of his remark was, 'Never indulge in much condemnation of a class of men. If you find that they are worse, in any respect, than the average of other men, you may be sure that in that respect they are subject to peculiar influences of evil.' The remark has a very wide scope.

Now look how it applies to literary men. Is there any class in the world who are liable to more disturbing and injurious influences? Consider the irregularity of payment to them for their work. See how they are at the mercy of public events. There comes a war, or a change of ministry, or a dissolution of parliament, or a disastrous scarcity of food, or a convulsion in the money market. The men who feel the pressure first are men of letters. Literary men in troublous times are like a company of poor players who have set themselves down, unwittingly, in some country town, where the Mayor is serious and the principal clergyman hyper-serious; and the players blow their trumpets in vain, for few above the rabble come to hear them. Even the boys belonging to

serious families pass lingeringly by. The market is as unfit for such wares as a West India island for a consignment of skates. So, in literature, a poor fellow has prepared something, with great labour, which is to win him a few hundred pounds; and there comes one of these public disasters. His publisher tells him, the public will not attend to anything now in the way of literature; and that the publication of his work must be put off for some months. Conceive what this putting off may be to that poor man! Then compare with such a precarious pursuit the occupations of most other men. These are not so much at the mercy of public events. Often, whether the men are ill or well, their money comes in. People do not get tired of law, physic, or divinity,—still less of meat and clothing. Those who have chosen a line to work upon, which is a common line, get on by natural circumstances, and, if I may say so, inevitably. There is often no need with them for that perpetually renewed struggle which belongs to men of letters.

Then consider what an exhausting occupation theirs is—exhausting, I mean, to the nervous system; and do not wonder if they have recourse to all kinds of excitement to make up for this exhaustion. Great statesmen are proverbially large eaters. It proceeds from the same cause.

Then turn to another branch of the subject. There are no people who are so much courted by society as

men of letters. There are no people who are so extensively liable to intrusion. All this may prevent a wise attention to their own affairs. Take the highest instances. The Duke of Wellington, I have no doubt, suffered a great deal from intrusion, but not so much as Sir Walter Scott did.

These considerations make it desirable that there should be very few of such persons as men of letters, and, if you like, Ellesmere, that they should be put to death early. If we lived in a 'New Atlantis,' you might be one of the 'Fathers of Solomon's House,' perhaps the one so beautifully described by Bacon. 'He was a man of middle stature and age, comely of person, and had an aspect as if he pitied men.' And to you might be entrusted the duty of destroying nascent men of letters. At present here they are in considerable numbers; and I think a little sympathy might not be ill expended upon them. It is easy to say that they might change their occupation; but who, in middle life (and that is the time when they find out these things), can change his occupation? If they are at all proficient in their art, they must have given a great deal of labour to it. You must admit that the power of writing is not attained without exceeding carefulness. How few can say a thing as it ought to be said! All of us try—bishops, judges, statesmen, diplomatists; but not many men in any generation can make a clear statement, or write anything well.

Again, look at the amount of criticism these men of letters have to bear up against. It is an odd idea of mine, but I always say that if the prime elements of life supplied to London—the water, and the bread, and the air—had been half as much criticised as the books that appear there, we should long ago have made a great advance in longevity.

The most cruel thing, too, is that an author's, or an artist's past works are often his greatest enemies. Every witling is ready to remark that an author is falling off, and that the trick of his writing is found out.

I sometimes think with sadness that there must come a time for men of letters, even for the most eminent of them, when, unless they are very sensible and contented men, they must have somewhat galling reflections in contemplating the careers of other men as contrasted with their own. They see those whom they remember stupid boys at school with them, or at any rate second-rate boys; and these boys are now thriving merchants, deans, archdeacons, bishops, commissioners, judges, or general officers. They have profited by routine, and have 'got on,' as it is called; and their advance is secure. Whereas the man of letters has to make this year the same effort that he has made for the last fifteen years perhaps,—under disadvantageous circumstances too, for the world is beginning to get tired of him; and, according to adverse critics, has found out his ways.

The doctor gives the dose which, after some years' practice, he has made up his mind to be the right thing for the particular disorder he is treating: the clergyman has completed his stock of sermons, and shut up his views upon theology: the merchant, or the trader, or the solicitor, has set his business well on foot by this time; and, in the main, it goes trippingly, without any more excessive trouble on his part. These men have not, each year, to make a new stride in thought, if they would maintain their position. Yet this is the fate of men of letters.

Remember how few prizes there are for these men! Time was, when they were occasionally chosen for appointments, when they were selected as the secretaries to embassies, or even, as ambassadors and secretaries of state; but that has gone by, and routine has mostly pushed them out of every path but their own.

I am fully willing to allow that these considerations should make men very careful of entering upon a literary career. I think I would rather see Walter enduring a great illness than commencing the career of a mere man of letters. But let us have some sympathy for those people who are already in such a career, and who cannot well get out of it.

I may say these things, perhaps not ungracefully, as not belonging altogether to that class, being by nature a man of business, and having, for some of the best years of my life, been employed in pursuits

far removed from literature; but I often feel, Ellesmere (for these remarks are addressed to you), that you speak somewhat unkindly of men of letters, and so I have made this preachment to you.

ELLESMERE. Really, my dear fellow, I did not mean any harm. I only said what I did say to provoke you to make a defence; and I am sure you have made a very good one. You would not find me, if I were in power, insensible to the claims of literature.

DUNSFORD. We ought to be very grateful to those who amuse or instruct us.

MILVERTON. You must own that I did not talk any of the nonsense that is sometimes talked about men of letters. I do not think that they are underrated in a social point of view. On the contrary, it appears to me that hardly any men are so well received in society as they are, and therein lies a great temptation for them.

ELLESMERE. Let us change the subject. I assure you, Milverton, I did not mean to say anything unkind.

But now, as we shall not see one another for some time, and as I observe you all take opportunities in conversation of strengthening the views that you have advocated in writing—as Mr. Midhurst is always touching up his essay on Human Misery, Milverton his essay on War, and Dunsford his discourse on Pleasantness, if not in words at least by his behaviour

[here I was obliged to make a very low bow]—I wish to say something which has been in my mind for the last three weeks with regard to my essay on the 'Arts of Self-advancement.' I think you will admit that my new idea is not to be despised. I confess that I took up that subject of self-advancement somewhat jestingly. But I have been led to consider it a great deal since I wrote upon it. I begin to find how true is the remark, that one never acquires clear ideas about a thing until one has to make a statement in speech or writing about it. I believe that since writing that essay I have discovered one of the great elements of success in life, which had hitherto quite escaped my attention. I am thoroughly serious now in what I am going to say.

This great element is exaggeration. A man becomes notable, not from the justness and accuracy of his thoughts, but from their vividness and from the strength with which he expresses them. One-sided men prevail. Look at the Bar. It is the unmeasured advocacy which makes itself conspicuous. In politics there is the same thing. A forcible man takes up a one-sided view and advocates it with the greatest exaggeration. Forthwith he becomes notable. If he is a man of action rather than of speech, you will observe that, for his mode of acting to be successful, there must be a want of measure in it. In literature the same law is visible. It is not the just and cautious historian for whose works there will be an inordinate

demand, but some writer who paints his characters with untruthful force, with unhesitating clearness, and with abundant exaggeration. He must not, like poor Southey, meditate a whole morning about the justness of a particular epithet. In other kinds of writing the same principle holds good. I do not say that for permanent reputation justice is not one of the first requisites; but I was speaking solely of success in life, which is a very brief affair.

There are many reasons why this exaggeration ensures success. It is easy work: it at once gains attention: it saves thought both on the part of the writer and the reader, of the speaker and the hearer, of the actor and the observer. I come back to my old argument about time. There is not time in the world to listen to just people. Justice is encumbered by doubts, reservations, subtleties and explanations. Justice is parenthetical and tiresome. Justice, in fine, is not a good advertisement. Men are so apathetic that their attention must be roused by what is striking and unmeasured. There is a dash of caricature in almost everything that is immediately successful. In addressing such men as you, I need not worry the subject any more. You must see at once what I mean: and do you not admit that there is a great deal in it?

MILVERTON. There certainly is.

MR. MIDHURST. I do not quite see what you mean when you apply your principle to men of action.

ELLESMERE. Perhaps I ought to have varied the expression. Men of action succeed by an unwarrantable boldness which corresponds with exaggeration in writers and speakers. Take the careers of many of the most prominent men, and you will understand what I mean. You will see how unmeasured and improbable have often been their expectations; and yet their boldness has carried those expectations into reality. In one or two of the most remarkable examples in this age you might almost say that the expectations of these men have been nearly akin to madness. But their expectations have been successfully realized. It is wonderful what a man can do who will not perceive obstacles.

However, I must own that I am stronger when I keep strictly to my main point, that exaggeration of expression is one of the greatest means of success.

DUNSFORD. How does this apply to my profession?

ELLESMERE. In the most absolute manner. Is it by holding very temperate views that men in your profession succeed? Is it not by being notable members of a party? And that brings me to another branch of the subject. By exaggeration you attach a party to you. You become one of the prominent men in it. You enjoy in your own proper person a considerable part of the force which belongs to that party. Mind, again, there is a time when justice may be very useful; but it is when you have attained

a high position. The brilliant advocate, when he becomes a judge, requires another sort of nature. The eminent High or Low churchman when he becomes a bishop, must know how to rule justly men of various opinions in the church. The great leader of a party must have a fairness and discretion that might have hindered his rising. Even the remarkable man of letters, when he has gained the world's attention, would secure it, perhaps, for ages, if he could write fairly and justly. Critical persons begin to observe the great man's writings, and frequently, after he has gained this height, it is a continued decadence for him in the minds of thoughtful men. For, after all, it is only real worth that ultimately prevails. But hardly in this life, and it is present success that I am speaking of.

MR. MIDHURST. The proposition that Ellesmere has just been working out would have been a very valuable addition to his essay. How it goes to prove my views! What a melancholy thing it is that men are to rise into notice through some defect of character. Some time ago Milverton alluded to Pope Celestine the Fifth. I wonder whether you know that he is the Pope whom it is said Dante alludes to in those lines, where he speaks of 'the great refusal'

> 'Guardai, e vidi l' ombra di colui
> Che fece per viltate il gran rifiuto.'

You see even Dante scorns the man who refused power and dignity. If a man rises to place and

power by something which may be called '*il gran tradimento*,' the great betrayal, that is often quite forgotten.

MILVERTON. No: not forgotten. Treachery may be successful; but there is an immense retribution in the loss of esteem on the part of those whose opinion is best worth having. Did you ever see a little poem of Browning's, called 'The Lost Leader?'

MR. MIDHURST. No.

MILVERTON.

> 'Just for a handful of silver he left us,
> Just for a riband to stick in his coat.'

And then afterwards it describes the party he had deserted.

> 'We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him,
> Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
> Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
> Made him our pattern to live and to die.'

I cannot remember the rest accurately; but the poem tells how they, the deserted, will go on doing their work, fighting their battle, not regarding him 'the lost leader' with anger, but with unutterable sorrow; and even if he returns to them, there will be—

> 'The glimmer of twilight,
> Never glad confident morning again.'

This happens to be a poem of a purely local kind, applying to English politics; but the spirit of it is universal. You talk of success: what success can

compensate for being so sorrowed over? And frequently the man himself is the one who sorrows most over himself: who knows and feels what he might have been.

MR. MIDHURST. I will not dwell upon these subjects. I have no supporter here. I will turn to something else. Both Milverton and Ellesmere have chosen their topics for conversation during this walk. Now there is one that I want to hear discussed. We began talking about it at the farm-yard, but it was treated in a cursory manner. It is the question of race. What have you got, Milverton, to say about it? In the absence of the remarkable writer whose views, when at the farm, you opposed, you had it all your own way. I, too, having seen many of the principal races of the world, have some opinions on the subject. But I should like first to hear yours.

ELLESMERE. I should like to hear them too. I believe Mr. Midhurst asks for them solely because he wants to sit down. So let us seat ourselves on the dry bank of this muddy sheep-pond, which I dare say Milverton admires very much; and let us pass in review the various races of mankind, beginning with Caucasians and ending with those people who believe in the perfectibility of man being obtained through the medium of large armies. That must be a race very low down in the scale.

MILVERTON. Are you prepared to listen for a few minutes to what I should say upon race? It is a

subject which I cannot treat less briefly; and I must not be interrupted at every point by Ellesmere, if I am to endeavour to give you anything like a view of my opinions on the matter.

ELLESMERE. I will promise not to interrupt.

DUNSFORD. It is impossible to discuss such a question in a short, sharp, conversational method.

ELLESMERE. I am quite aware of that, Dunsford. Milverton may proceed with a perfect assurance that I shall behave properly.

MILVERTON. In the first place you will admit that there are apparently great differences of race. A negro is a very different creature from a pure Caucasian; and, without going into these extremes, you must admit that a Celt is a very different creature from a Saxon, and will act differently under the same circumstances.

It is however maintained, and with a great deal of sagacity, that all mankind may be traced back to one race. Many of the most eminent men of science agree with theologians upon this point. I might cite several illustrious names; but you will be content to take my word for the fact.

You come then to the point of what is the cause, or what are the causes of these differences. Here then we may admit, if we like, that the causes are to be found in certain differences of climate, food, aspects of nature—and circumstances of every variety and description connected with locality,—for I think

it unwise to limit ourselves to the three sets of circumstances first named.

Now comes the point at which I wish to diverge from many thinkers and writers on this subject. They would say: you admit that these circumstances have caused the differences in race. What then need we say more about the matter? I beg to remark however, on the other hand, that these influences of climate, food, soil, &c., have been translated as it were into a change of tissue, and expressed in life. I must dwell upon this point more. These influences, to which we have alluded, have become hardened and set in different branches of the human family: have taken form as it were—are henceforth generated. From that moment those influences may cease to produce their full effect: they have established something which may tend to counteract them. Take, for instance, the woolly hair and peculiar skin of the negro. These phenomena might have been produced by peculiarities of climate, soil and food, or, as I would rather say generally, by peculiarities of condition,—but thenceforward they are expressed in a new nature, which may tend to counteract, nay which does tend to counteract, the effect of this peculiar condition. I maintain therefore that it is unphilosophical, and likely to lead to great error, if we persist in ignoring the effects of race, and merely referring all the varied phenomena that we see to those circumstances and influences which may have produced

(mark you, it is only *may have*) these changes in the human structure, but which are now expressed in new or at least in modified forms of being.

Of course everything that we see may probably be referred to a few simple laws of immense applicability. The progress of all philosophy is leading us to that conclusion. The elementary materials of the world are being gradually found to be fewer and fewer. The action of these materials is found to depend upon few laws. A crystal seeks to cure itself of injury somewhat after the fashion that an injured part of the human body does. I admit all this; but still I contend that, in considering the affairs of this world, which after all we have but a small portion of time to work upon, it is wise to recognise those differences of race which have been to a certain extent consummated, as independent facts. It may be well, therefore, for a physical philosopher to refer all the varieties of being which he sees around him to a few laws such as those of light and heat and electricity (which perhaps are but one law); but it is unwise for a philosophic historian to do otherwise than recognise the existence of the laws of race, which, for the limited time of which he is treating, are all-important for him. Dr. Prichard may have been able to show that there is good ground for believing that French nature has been made to differ from English nature by certain physical circumstances; but the practical man of the world had better study the immense difference that

does exist between these races, which will make them act very differently under the same circumstances.

Words, for instance, set in the shape of phrases, do not go so deep down into an Englishman as into a Frenchman. Historical writers, who discuss the great French Revolution, often seem to me to forget the difference of race. They talk as if the same grievances would have produced the same results in any other nation.

ELLESMERE. Ah, it was a sad omission of mine not bringing up the French Revolution, when we were discussing despotism.

MILVERTON. It would not have affected my views. That revolution is, doubtless, the most remarkable thing that has occurred in profane history. No man is quite the same after having read an account of it, even the most meagre account, as he was before. But I suppose what you mean to insinuate is, that it furnishes an instance of a mob being more difficult to deal with than a despot. I cannot agree with you. The commanding men were not on the side that we could wish to have seen them. Danton did not discourage the September massacres. Had there been good and great men 'to the fore,' as the Irish say, they would have had immense influence, I think. But what I mentioned the French Revolution for, was to indicate the difference of race. Both the good points and the bad points in the French character tended greatly to make that revolution

what it was. The English could not have been worked to that height of hope and dream of universal brotherhood, by which the French were frenzied. As I said before, phrases do not penetrate deeply into our nature. We are too cool and impassive for that to happen. Neither does neatness of expression affect us much.

Again, in considering Ireland and the Irish I have always been very much struck by the effect of race. You have a climate there, which from its moistness would, I believe, affect the spirits of any other race, certainly of the Anglo-Saxon; but in Ireland you have the gayest people in the world. It is in vain that it rains all day, day after day, in the west or south-west of Ireland. The Irishman is not to be daunted by that, but is as gay and pleasant as if he basked in Neapolitan sunshine.

MR. MIDHURST. These are exactly my sentiments. I have only had to deal with human beings, as a diplomatist, and not as a physical philosopher who pretended to know or who cared to know anything about their tissues. With every man I have had to deal I have kept well in mind the race from which he sprung, and have found it very serviceable to do so.

ELLESMERE. I, too, agree with Milverton as far as he has gone. I have not had to deal much with men of different races, but only with men of different characters; and I think as much of

character as you do of race. Indeed it is the favourite subject of my thoughts.

DUNSFORD. Now then we will hear Ellesmere discourse upon character; and we will be as patient as we were in listening to Milverton upon race.

ELLESMERE. Well I go very far in my speculations on the subject, and incline to believe that wherever life enters, even in the lowest forms, there are the rudiments of individual character. All, therefore, that Milverton said in the farm-yard on that head fitted very well into my notions upon the subject.

To pass, however, from the brute creation up to man. You see two common-place men, belonging to the same class, born and bred in the same circumstances, and moving together pretty well as members of a class. You think they are as much alike as one oyster is to another (both oysters being without the disease of pearl-breeding); but should you come to know these two men intimately well, you often find that there are gulfs of difference between them. In fact you find that there is not anybody who is common-place. I cannot help thinking of what Dunsford used to teach us at College: that there are infinitely small quantities which yet differ from each other infinitely—different orders of infinitesimals, he used to call them.

Well, then, I agree with Hazlitt, who was a very shrewd thinker,—that men's characters do not alter much after their earliest years. The boys that I knew

well at school are the same boys now. The beard was rudimentary then: it is fully developed now. That is the chief difference. One boy was mean in playing at marbles; and he is mean now in playing for high office and great dignities. Another was profuse with bull's-eyes and toffy: a large experience of life has not tamed his liberality; and, when the poor fellow has nothing else to give, he offers you his best wishes, and is ready to go anywhere or do anything for you. Milverton took me aside in the cricket field at our school to prove to me that the repeal of the corn laws must be carried, and that the British aristocracy would suffer a great deal if they made too prolonged a resistance. He took me aside this morning to pour out to me his wailings about the increase of taxation. In neither case was I as much agitated by what he told me as I ought to have been. We preserve our characters exactly.

But I should like to consider character more minutely, and to remark with Milverton, for here I agree with him, what an enormous amount of tolerance is needed in regarding the actions of men when you take into consideration the essential difference of their characters.

Look at the difference of a vain man from one who is indifferent to vanity—of a sensitive man from a hard man—of a kind from a cruel man. These differences of character are, as I contend, marked from the first; and it is perfect madness to expect that

the vain man will not be influenced by his vanity right through every transaction of his life.

Then consider all the permutations and combinations according to which these various qualities may be worked into a character. The same quality does not pervade and leaven the character uniformly. The human soul does not resemble one of those strange caverns in which it appears animals took shelter, where all the hyena-bones are found together, all the wolf-bones side by side, the elephant remains by themselves, the skeletons of deers by themselves, and the whole thing fossilized into exact compartments. But in man there will be a layer of fierce hyena, or of timid deer, running through the nature in the most uncertain and tortuous manner. Nero is sensitive to poetry and music, but not to human suffering: Marcus Aurelius is tolerant and good to all men but Christians. Certainly, qualities are often inserted in a character in a most curious and inharmonious way; and, the end is, that you have a man who is the strangest mixture of generosity and meanness, of kindness and severity, even of dishonesty and nobleness. Real men are not at all like chessmen. The Queen is not debarred from the knight's move: the little pawn will advance sometimes with all the sweep and rectangularity of a castle; and the bishop is not always diagonal in his way of proceeding.

Then the passions enter. Sometimes these just fit in, unfortunately, with good points of character, so

that one man may be ruined by a passion which another and a worse man would have escaped unhurt from.

Then, there are the circumstances to which a character is exposed, and which vary so much, that it hardly seems that people are living in the same world, so different are to them the outward things they have to contend with. Returning to my chess simile: there are no well-defined squares to move upon; nothing is quite black, and nothing is quite white.

Altogether the human being becomes such a complicated creature, that though at last you may know something about some one specimen—what it will say and what it will do on a given occasion—you never know enough about the creature to condemn it.

DUNSFORD. This is all very sound talk on the part of Ellesmere; and I see that Miss Vernon approves of it amazingly: but it is a little unlike the Ellesmere we have been accustomed to listen to.

MILVERTON. He might have pursued the subject further. There is temperament, which is something different from character, which often obscures it, and utterly bewilders our views about it. I remember travelling once with two brothers in a very hot country where we suffered greatly from mosquitos. I recollect on a particular occasion that one of the brothers would not suffer his brother or anybody else to sleep

quietly for a minute, but passed the night in raging and raving against these little tiresome insects. The other brother exhorted him to patience. He replied, 'Tis very well for you to talk: these cursed creatures do not molest you.' When morning came the patient brother was scarcely recognisable; but he had suffered in silence. What a difference in temperament between the two brothers! You might naturally conclude that their different ways of enduring trouble and vexation of all kinds must have been indicated by their different ways of enduring mosquitos. Not a bit of it. There would come, for instance, another vexation, similar in kind, that would find the patient brother irritable and intolerant, and the other calm, placid and victorious. It requires an immense knowledge of individual men before you can appreciate the diversities and peculiarities of their temperaments.

Altogether I agree with Ellesmere, who must, I think, be somewhat unwell as he is so different from the usual Ellesmere, that man is too complicated a creature for his fellow-men to indulge in much blame of him,* though this need not prevent us from pro-

* I take a peculiar view of this matter, which I did not trouble my friends with then. It is this—that all hasty judgment of our fellow-creatures is such an unscientific proceeding. You comment upon another man's conduct, and attribute motives to him. Now an ingenious and imaginative person—a lawyer making a speech for him—might show many different motives of equal probability. You fix upon one, perhaps because it is consonant to your own mind and nature, or because it is the upper-

testing loudly against many of his actions. For instance, I protest loudly against the actions of certain warlike monarchs, but I have no doubt that if I knew their characters, their circumstances, and their temperaments intimately, I should be much more inclined to pity than to blame.

ELLESMERE. It requires a large amount of tolerance to be tolerant of such people.

DUNSFORD. 'There is a much harder work for tolerance than that: it is to be tolerant of intolerant people; to see how natural their intolerance is, and in fact thoroughly to comprehend it and feel for it. This is the last stage of tolerance, which few men, I suppose, in this world attain.

MR. MIDHURST. Tolerance appears to me as yet an unworked mine. Men have got a little of the gold which has been washed down by the rivers; have even perhaps gathered some of the surface ore; but have not yet made their way into what Australian miners call, the 'reefs.' We have ceased to persecute men largely about differences in religion.

most or easiest one to conjecture; but really you often ignore the doctrine of chances, and perhaps you would find upon strict calculation that the chances are fairly four to one against your having named the right motive. As the winning horse is often 'a dark one' (is not that the right phrase?), at any rate not the favourite, so after all some obscure and improbable motive is often the true cause of a man's actions. I maintain that our condemnation of others is often as unscientific as it is unchristian. This is a pedantic way of putting the thing, but an old fellow of a college may be excused for a little pedantry.

Yet this is but a beginning; and all the ways of men, the 'windy ways,' as Tennyson calls them, will have to be looked at with a spirit of toleration which is yet undreamt of.

MILVERTON. There is one great difficulty to be surmounted; and that is, how to make hard, clear, righteous men, who have not sinned much, have not suffered much, are not afflicted by strong passions, who have not many ties in the world, and who have been easily prosperous—how to make such men tolerant.

Think of this for a moment. For a man who has been rigidly good to be supremely tolerant, would require an amount of insight which seems to belong only to the greatest genius. I have often fancied that the main scheme of the world is to create tenderness in man; and I have a notion that the outer world would change if man were to acquire more of this tenderness. You see at present he is obliged to be kept down by urgent wants of all kinds, or he would otherwise have more time and thought to devote to cruelty and discord. If he *could* live in a better world, I mean in a world where nature was more propitious, I believe he would have such a world. And in some mysterious way I suspect that nature is constrained to adapt herself to the main impress of the characters of the average beings in the world.

ELLESMERE. These are very extraordinary thoughts.

DUNSFORD. They are not far from Christianity.

MILVERTON. You must admit, Ellesmere, that

Christianity has never been tried. I do not ask you to canvass doctrinal and controversial matters. But take the leading precepts: read the 'Sermon on the Mount,' and see if it is the least like the doctrines of modern life.

DUNSFORD. I cannot help thinking, when you are all talking of tolerance, why you do not use the better word, of which we hear something in Scripture: charity.

MILVERTON. If I were a clergyman, there is much that I should dislike to have to say (being a man of very dubious mind): there is much also that I should dislike to have to read; but I should feel that it was a great day for me, when I had to read out that short but most abounding chapter from St. Paul on charity. The more you study that chapter, the more profound you find it. The way that the Apostle begins is most remarkable; and I doubt if it has been often duly considered. We think much of knowledge in our own times; but consider what an early Christian must have thought of one who possessed the gift of tongues, or the gift of prophecy. Think also what the early Christian must have thought of the man who possessed 'all faith.' Then listen to St. Paul's summing up of these great gifts in comparison with charity. Dunsford will give us the words. You remember them, I dare say.

DUNSFORD. * 'Though I speak with the tongues

* 1 Cor. ch. xiii.

of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

'And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.'

MILVERTON. You will let me proceed I know, if it is only to hear more from Dunsford of that chapter. I have said that the early Christian would have thought much of the man who possessed the gifts of tongues, of prophecy, of faith. But how he must have venerated the rich man who entered into his little community, and gave up all his goods to the poor. Again, how the early Christian must have regarded, with longing admiration, the first martyrs for his creed. Then hear what St. Paul says of this outward charity, and of this martyrdom, when compared with the infinitely more difficult charity of the soul and martyrdom of the temper. Dunsford will proceed with the chapter.

DUNSFORD. 'And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.'

MILVERTON. Pray go on, Dunsford.

DUNSFORD. 'Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

'Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

'Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

'Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.'

MILVERTON. That is surely one of the most beautiful things that has ever been written by man. It does not do to talk much after it. Let us proceed with our walk.

We walked on in silence for some time, until, turning home, we came suddenly in view of Donati's comet. It was that night when Arcturus was close to the nucleus of the comet. I think it was the most majestic sight I ever saw in the Heavens.

ELLESMERE. And so you think, Milverton, that if we were good enough for it, we should have a better world to live in; and perhaps some celestial messenger, like this, instead of dripping from its 'horrid hair' pestilence and war, 'affrighting monarchs with the fear of change,' would be the bearer of some beneficent change of climate.

MILVERTON. My dear friend, I say nothing of the sort. Most presumptuous would be the man who

should, with our small knowledge, prophesy minutely about the changes of the earth. But I do hold, and we may surely be indulged in harmless hopes of this kind, that if we were better; if we were softer and kinder to one another; Nature would be softer and kinder to us. If you like, however, to keep strictly within the bounds of experience, you must own that, even by human agencies, the amelioration of nature has for the most part proceeded *pari passu* with the amelioration of man.

Ellesmere made no reply; and I was glad that he did not. I think even he was deeply impressed with the solemnity of the scene. We naturally talked of Astronomy, and of the great hopes which this boundless universe holds out for man. 'In my Father's house are many mansions,' was a theme which I ventured to dwell upon. Mr. Midhurst, true to his melancholy views to the last, muttered to himself, but I overheard him, the following lines:—

'Night brings out stars as sorrows show us truths:
Though many, yet they help not; bright they light not.
They are too late to serve us: and sad things
Are aye too true. We never see the stars
Till we can see nought but them. So with truth.'*

* *Festus.*

One observation of Milverton's, as to the appearance of the Universe, struck me as new and very remarkable. I had better give it in his own words.

MILVERTON. Yes; I say that the whole Heavens may present to superior beings the appearance of a solid body. You all recollect what Boscovich and other physical writers have said about the ultimate atoms of matter—that they do not touch, and that they have what we call repulsion for one another. That distance from each other which is requisite for the ultimate atoms of this gaunt tree we are looking upon, which yet presents a solid appearance, may find perhaps an exact parallel in the distances of these stars one from another. They may therefore, to a Being, who could behold them after the same fashion as we behold this tree, present the appearance of solidity. I cannot help thinking that no space is lost, and that the whole Universe is as much occupied as the space which this tree seems to occupy. There are small creatures to whom that stone appears compact, while all the rest perhaps that it can behold, seems wide and disjointed. Yet to us these wide disjointed things are solid.

I do not know how you may take my fancies, but at any rate, I trust you feel with me, that there is immortal consolation in the aspect of these heavens which we are allowed to look upon, probably the

greatest physical privilege permitted to man; and that from this vast contemplation we may derive some comfort for every sorrow, some alleviation for every regret, and some benign hope to throw a ray of cheerfulness into the gloomiest depth of despondency.

Little more was said by any of us; and I am glad that it was after such a conversation, in which all our feelings were united and which breathed much of calmness and of hope, that my labours ended, and that I have nothing more now to report of the sayings or doings of my 'Friends in Council.'

THE END.

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